

Part The Second

VOL-2

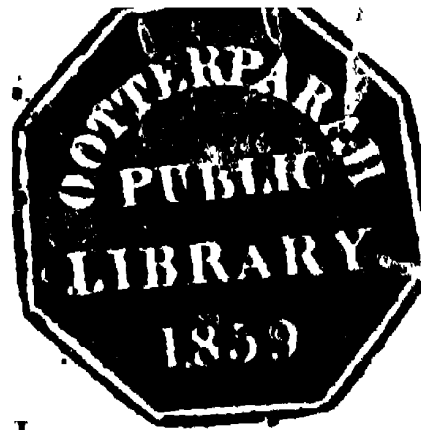
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PART THE SECOND.



I.

Our school-boy days are looked back to by all with fondness. Oppressed with the cares of life, we contrast our worn and harassed existence with that sweet prime free from anxiety, and fragrant with innocence. I cannot share these feelings. I was a most miserable child, and school I detested more than I ever abhorred the world in the darkest moments of my experienced manhood. But the University—this new life yielded me different feelings, and still commands a grateful remembrance.

My father, who studied to foster in me every worldly feeling, sought all means which might tend to make me enamoured of that world, to which he was devoted. An extravagant allowance, a Jewish establishment, many servants, numerous horses, were forced upon, rather than solicited by me. According to his system, he acted liberally. My youthful brain could not be insensible to the brilliant position in which I was placed. I was now, indeed, my own master, and everything around me announced, that I could command a career flattering to the rising passions of my youth. I well remember the extreme self-complacency with which I surveyed my new apartments, how instantaneously I was wrapped up in all the mysteries,

and how I seemed to have in

other purpose in life, than to play the honoured and honourable part of an elegant and accomplished host.

My birth, my fortune, my convivial habits, rallied around me the noble and the gay, the flower of our society. Joyously flew our careless hours, while we mimicked the magnificence of men. We had no thought but for the present moment. I discoursed only of dogs and horses, of fanciful habitments and curious repasts. I astonished them by a new fashion, and decided upon the exaggerated charms of some ordinary female. How long the novelty of my life would have been productive of interest I know not. An incident occurred which changed my habits.

A new Professor arrived at the University. He was by birth a German.

tended, by an accident, his preliminary lecture on Grecian history. I had been hunting, and had suddenly returned home. Throwing my gown over my forest frock, I strolled, for the sake of change, into the theatre. I nodded with a smile to some of my acquaintance. I glanced with listlessness at the instructor. His abstracted look, the massiness of his skull, his large luminous eye, his long grey hair, his earnest and impassioned manner, struck me. He discoursed on that early portion of Grecian history which is entirely unknown. I was astonished at the fulness of his knowledge. That which to a common student appears but an inexplicable, or barren tradition, became, in his magical mould, a record teeming with deep knowledge and picturesque interest. Hordes

who hitherto were only dimly distinguished
wandering over the deserts of Antiquity,
now figured as great nations, multiplying
in beautiful cities, and moving in the grand
and progressive march of civilization, and
I listened to animated narratives of their
creeds, their customs, their manners, their
philosophy, and their arts. I was deeply
impressed with this mystical creation of a
critical spirit. I was charmed with the
blended profundity and imagination. I
revelled in the sagacious audacity of his
revolutionary theories. I yielded to the
full spell of his archaic eloquence. The
curtain was removed from the sacred shrine
of antique ages, and an inspired prophet,
ministering in the sanctuary, expounded
the mysteries which had perplexed all

imperfect intelligence of their remote posterity.

The lecture ceased; I was the first who broke into plaudits; I advanced, I offered to our master my congratulations and my homage. Now that his office had finished I found him the meekest, the most modest and nervous being that ever trembled in society. With difficulty he would receive the respectful compliments even of his pupils. He bowed and blushed, and disappeared. His reserve only the more interested me. I returned to my rooms, musing over the high matters of his discourse. Upon my table was a letter from one of my companions, full of ribald jests. I glanced at its uncongenial lines, and tossed it away unread. I fell into a reverie

of Arcadian loveliness. A beautiful temple rose up in my mind like the temple in the picture of Winter. The door opened, a band of loose revellers burst into their accustomed gathering room. I was silent, reserved, cold, moody. Their inane observations amazed me. I shrunk from their hollow tattle, and the gibberish of their foul slang. Their unmeaning, idiotic shouts of laughter tortured me. I knew not how to rid myself of their infernal presence. At length one offered me a bet. I rushed out of the chamber.

I did not stop until I reached the room of the Professor. I found him buried in his books. He stared at my entrance. I apologized, I told him all I felt, all I wanted; the wretched life I was leading, my deep sympathy with his character.

infinite disgust at my own career, my unbounded love of knowledge, and admiration of himself.

The simplicity of the Professor's character was not shocked by my frank enthusiasm. Had he been a man of the world, he would have been alarmed, lest my strong feeling and unusual conduct should have placed us both in a ridiculous position. On the contrary, without a moment's hesitation he threw aside his papers and opened his heart to all my wants. My imperfect knowledge of the Greek language was too apparent. Nothing could be done until I mastered it. He explained to me a novel and philosophical mode of acquiring a full acquaintance with it. As we proceeded in our conversation, he gradually indicated the outlines of his

grand system of metaphysics. I was fascinated by the gorgeous prospect of comprehending the unintelligible. The Professor was gratified by the effect that his first effusion had produced. He was interested by the ardour of my mind. He was flattered in finding an enthusiastic votary in one whose mode of life had hitherto promised anything but study, and whose position in society was perhaps an apology, if not a reason, for an irrational career.

I announced to my companions, that I was going to read. They stared, they pitied me. Some deemed the avowal affectation, and trusted that increased frolic would repay them for the abstinence of a week of application. Fleming and his books was only a fresh instance of his

studied eccentricity. But they were disappointed. I worked at Greek for nearly fourteen hours a day; and, at the end of a month, I had gained a very ample acquaintance with the construction of the language, and a still fuller one of its signification. So much can be done by an ardent and willing spirit. I had been for six or seven years nominally a Greek student, and had learnt nothing, and how many persons waste even six or seven more and only find themselves in the same position!

I was amply rewarded for my toilsome effort. I felt the ennobling pride of learning. It is a fine thing to know that which is unknown to others, it is still more dignified to remember that we have gained it by our own energies. The struggle after

Knowledge too is full of delight. The intellectual chase, not less than the material one, brings fresh vigour to our pulses, and infinite palpitations of strange and sweet suspense. The idea that is gained with effort affords far greater satisfaction, than that which is acquired with dangerous facility. We dwell with more fondness on the perfume of the flower that we have ourselves tended, than on the odour which we curl with carelessness, and cast away without remorse. The strength and sweetness of our knowledge depend upon the impression which it makes upon our own minds. It is the liveliness of the ideas, that it affords, which renders Research so fascinating, so that a trifling fact or deduction, when discovered, or worked out, by our own brain, affords us infinitely greater

pleasure, than a more important truth obtained by the exertions of another:

I thought only of my books; I was happy. I was quite emancipated from my painful selfishness. My days passed in unremitting study. My love of composition unconsciously developed itself. My notebooks speedily filled, and my annotations soon swelled into treatises. Insensibly I had become an author. I wrote with facility, for I was master of my subject. I was fascinated with the expanding of my own mind. I resolved to become a great historical writer. Without intention, I fixed upon subjects in which Imagination might assist Erudition. I formed gigantic schemes, which many lives could not have accomplished; yet I was sanguine I should achieve all. I mused over an original

style which was to blend profound philosophy and deep learning, and brilliant eloquence. The nature of man, and the origin of nations, were to be expounded in glowing sentences of oracular majesty.

Suddenly the University announced a gold medal for the writer of the ablest treatise upon the Dorian people. The subject delighted me. Similar ones had already engaged my notice. I determined to be a candidate.

I shut myself up from all human beings; I collected all the variety of information that I could glean from the most ancient authors, and the rarest modern treatises. I moulded the crude matter into luminous order. A theory sprang out of the confused mass, like light out of

chaos. The moment of composition commenced. I wrote the first sentence while in chapel, and under the influence of music. It sounded like the organ that inspired it. The whole was composed in my head before I committed it to paper,—composed in my daily rides, and while pacing my chamber at midnight. The action of my body seemed to lend vitality to my mind.

Never shall I forget the moment when I finished the last sentence of my fair copy, and, sealing it, consigned it with a motto to the Principal. It was finished, and at the very instant my mind seemed exhausted, my power vanished. The excitement had ceased. I dashed into the forest, and throwing myself under a tree,

passed the first of many days that flew away in perfect indolence, and vague and unmeaning reverie.

In spite of my great plans, which demanded the devotion of a life, and were to command the admiration of a grateful and enlightened world, I was so anxious about the fate of my prize essay, that all my occupations suddenly ceased. I could do nothing. I could only think of sentences which might have been more musical, and deductions which might have been more logically true. Now that it was finished, I felt its imperfectness. Week after week I grew more desponding, and the very morning of the decision, I had entirely discarded all hope.

It was announced: the medal was awarded, and to me. Amid the plaudits

of a "crowded theatre," I recited my triumphant essay. Full of victory, my confident voice lent additional euphony to the flowing sentence, and my bright, firm eye added to the acuteness of my reasoning, and enforced the justice of my theory. I was entirely satisfied. No passage seemed weak. Noble, wealthy, the son of the minister, congratulations came thick upon me. The seniors complimented each other on such an example to the student. I was the idol of the University. The Essay was printed, lavishly praised in all the journals, and its author, full of youth and promise, anticipated as the future ornament of his country. I returned to my father in a blaze of glory.

II.

I ADDRESSED him with the confidence that I was now a man, and a distinguished one. My awe of his character had greatly worn off. I was most cordial to the Baroness, but a slight strain of condescension was infused into my courtesy. I had long ceased to view her with dislike: on the contrary, I had even become her protégé. That was now over. We were not less warm, but I was now the protector, and if there were a slight indication of pique, or a chance ebullition of temper, instead of their calling forth any simultaneous sentiments on my side, I only bowed with deference to her charms, or mildly smiled on

the engaging weaknesses of the inferior sex. I was not less self-conceited, or less affected, than before; but my self-conceit and my affectation were of a nobler nature. I did not consider myself a less finished member of society, but I was also equally proud of being the historiographer of the Dorians. I was never gloomy, I was never in repose. Self-satisfaction sparkled on my countenance, and my carriage was agitated with the earnestness and the excitement, with which I busied myself with the trivial and the trite. My father smiled, half with delight, and half with humour, upon my growing consciousness of importance, and introduced me to his friends with increased satisfaction. He even listened to me while, one day after dinner, I disserted upon the Pelasgi, but..

when he found that I believed in innate ideas, he thought my self-delusion began to grow serious.

As he was one of those men, who believe that directly to oppose a person in his opinions is a certain mode of confirming him in his error, he attacked me by a masked battery. Affecting no want of interest in my pursuits, he said to me one day in a very careless tone, ‘ Contarini, I am no great friend to reading, but as you have a taste that way, if I were you, during the vacation, I would turn over Voltaire.’

Now I had never read anything of Voltaire. The truth is, I had no very great opinion of the Philosopher of Ferney, for my friend, the Professor, had assured me, that Voltaire knew nothing of the Dorians.

that his Hebrew also was invariably incorrect, and that he was altogether a very superficial person,—but I chanced to follow my father's counsel.

I stood before the hundred volumes; I glanced with indifference upon the wondrous and witching shelf. History, Poetry, Philosophy, the lucid narrative, and the wild invention, and the unimpassioned truth—they were all before me, and with my ancient weakness for romance, I drew out *Zadig*. Never shall I forget the effect this work produced on me. What I had been long seeking offered itself. This strange mixture of brilliant fantasy and poignant truth, this unrivalled blending of ideal creation and worldly wisdom—it all seemed to speak to my two natures. I wandered a poet in the streets of Babylon,

or on the banks of the Tigris. A philosopher and a statesman, I moralized over the condition of man, and the nature of government. The style enchanted me. I delivered myself up to the full abandonment of its wild and brilliant grace.

I devoured them all, volume after volume. Morning, and night, and noon, a volume was ever my companion. I ran to it after my meals, it reposed under my pillow. As I read, I roared, I laughed, I shouted with wonder and admiration, I trembled with indignation at the fortunes of my race, my bitter smile sympathised with the searching ridicule, and withering mockery.

Pedants, and priests, and tyrants, the folios of dunces, the fires of inquisitors, and the dungeons of kings, and the long, dull

system of imposture and misrule, that had sat like a gloating incubus on the fair neck of Nature, and all our ignorance, and all our weakness, and all our folly, and all our infinite imperfection—I looked round—I thought of the dissertation upon the Dorians, and I considered myself the most contemptible of my wretched species.

I returned to the University : I rallied round me my old companions, whom I had discarded in a fit of disgusting pedantry. But not now merely to hold high revels. The goblet indeed still circled, but a bust of the author of ‘Candide’ over the head of the president, warned us, with a smile of prophetic derision, not to debase ourselves, and if we drank deep, our potations were perhaps necessary to refresh the inexperienced efforts of such novices in

philosophy. Yet we made way : even the least literary read the Romances, or parts of the Philosophical Dictionary, the emancipation of our minds was rapidly effecting, we entirely disembarassed ourselves of prejudice, we tried everything by the test of first principles, and finally we resolved ourselves into a Secret Union for the Amelioration of Society.

Of this institution, I had the honour of being elected president by acclamation. My rooms were the point of meeting. The members were in number twelve, chiefly my equals in rank and fortune. One or two of them were youths of talent, and not wholly untinctured by letters ; the rest were ardent, delighted with the novelty of what they did and heard, and, adopting

our thoughts, arrived at conclusions, the truth of which they did not doubt.

My great reputation at the University long prevented these meetings from being viewed with suspicion, and when the revolutionary nature of our opinions occasionally developed itself in a disregard for the authorities by some of our society, who perhaps considered such license as the most delightful portion of the new philosophy, my interest often succeeded in stifling a public explosion. In course of time, however, the altered tenor of my own conduct could no longer be concealed. My absence from lectures had long been overlooked, from the conviction that the time thus gained was devoted to the profundity of private study; but the systematic assembly at my rooms of those who

were most eminent for their disregard of discipline, and their neglect of study, could no longer be treated with inattention, and after several intimations from inferior officers, I was summoned to the presence of the High Principal.

This great personage was a clear-headed, cold-minded, unmanageable individual. I could not cloud his intellect, or control his purpose. My ever-successful sophistry, and my ever-fluent speech failed. At the end of every appeal, he recurred to his determination to maintain the discipline of the University, and repeated with firmness, that this was the last time our violation of it should be privately noticed. I returned to my rooms in a dark rage. My natural impatience of control, and hatred of responsibility, which had been kept off, of late

years, by the fondness of society, which developed itself with my growing passions, came back upon me. I cursed authority, I paced my room like Catiline.

At this moment my accustomed companions assembled. They were ignorant of what had passed, but they seemed to me to look like conspirators. Moody and ferocious, I headed the table, and filling bumper, I drank confusion to all government. They were surprised at such a novel commencement, for, in general, we only arrived at this great result by the growing and triumphant truths of a long evening, but they received my proposition, as indeed they ever did, with a shout.

The wine warmed me. I told them all. I even exaggerated in my rage the annoying intelligence. I described our pleasant

meetings about to cease for ever. I denounced the iniquitous system, which would tear us from the pursuit of real knowledge and ennobling truths—knowledge that illuminated, and truths that should support the destinies of existing man—to the deplorable and disgusting study of a small collection of imperfect volumes written by Greeks, and preserved by Goths. It was bitter to think that we must part. Surely Society, cruel society, would too soon sever the sweet and agreeable ties that bound our youth. Why should we be parted ever? Why, in pursuance of an unnatural system, abhorred by all of us—why were we to be dispensed, and sent forth to delude the world in monstrous disguises of priests, and soldiers, and statesmen? Out upon such hypocrisy! A curse light

upon the craven knave who would not struggle for his salvation from such a monotonous and degrading doom. The world was before us. Let us seize it in our prime. Let us hasten away—let us form a society in some inviolate solitude founded upon the eternal principles of truth and justice. Let us fly from the Feudal System. Nobles and wealthy, let us cast our titles to the winds, and our dross to the earth, which produced it. Let us pride ourselves only on the gifts of Nature, and exist only on her beneficence.*

I ceased, and three loud rounds of cheering announced to the High Principal, and all his slaves, that we had not yet yielded.

We drank deep. A proposition came forth with the wine of every glass. We all talked of America. Already we viewed

ourselves in a primæval forest, existing by
 the chance, to which many of us were de-
 voted. The very necessary toil of life
 seemed, in such an existence, to consist of
 what, in this worn-out world, was con-
 sidered the choicest pastime, and the highest
 pleasure. And the rich climate, and the
 simple manners, and the intelligible laws,
 and the fair Aborigines, who must be
 attracted by such interesting strangers—all
 hearts responded to the glowing vision. I
 alone was grave and thoughtful. The
 remembrance of Master Frederick, and the
 Venetian expedition, although now looked
 back to as a childish scrape, rendered me
 nevertheless the most practical of the party.
 I saw immediately the invincible difficulty
 of our reaching with success such a distant
 land. I lamented the glorious times when

the forests of our own northern land could afford an asylum to the brave and free."

The young Count de Pahlen was a great hunter. Wild in his life, and daring in his temper, he possessed, at the same time, a lively and not uncultivated intellect. He had a great taste for poetry, and, among other accomplishments, was an excellent actor. He rose up as I spoke, like a volcano out of the sea. "I have it, Fleming, I have it!" he shouted, with a dancing eye, and exulting voice. "You know the great forest of Jonsterna. Often have I hunted in it. The forest near us is but, as it were, a huge root of that vast woodland. Nearly in its centre is an ancient and crumbling castle, which, like all old ruins, is of course haunted. No peasant dare approach it. At its very mention the face of the forest

farmer will grow grave and serious. Let us fly to it. Let us become the scaring ghosts whom all avoid. We shall be free from man—we shall live only for ourselves—we—— but his proposition was drowned in our excited cheers, and rising together, we all pledged a sacred vow to stand or fall by each other in this great struggle for Freedom, and for Nature.

The night passed in canvassing plans to render this mighty scheme practicable. The first point was to baffle all inquiries after our place of refuge, and to throw all pursuers off the scent. We agreed that on a certain day, in small and separate parties, we should take our way by different routes to the old castle, which we calculated was about sixty miles distant. Each man was to bear with him a rifle, a sword, and pis-

tols, a travelling cloak, his knapsack, and as much ammunition as he could himself carry. Our usual hunting dress afforded an excellent uniform, and those, who were without it, were immediately to supply themselves. We were to quit the university without notice, and each of us on the same day was to write to his friends, to notify his sudden departure on a pedestrian tour in Norway. Thus we calculated to gain time, and effectually to baffle pursuit.

In spite of our lavish allowances, as it ever happens among young men, money was wanted. All that we possessed was instantly voted a common stock, but several men required rifles, and the funds were deficient. I called for a crucible: I opened a cabinet: I drew out my famous gold medal. I gazed at it for a moment, and

the classic cheers, amid which it had been awarded, seemed to rise upon my ear. I dashed away the recollection, and in a few minutes the splendid reward of my profound researches was melting over the fire, and affording the means of our full equipment.

III.

It was the fourth morning of our journey. My companion was Ulric de Brahe. He was my only junior among the band, delicate of frame and affectionate in disposition, though hasty if excited, but my enthusiastic admirer. He was my great friend, and I was almost as intent to support him under the great fatigue, as about the suc-

cess of our enterprise. I had bought a donkey in our progress of a farmer, and loaded it with a couple of kegs of the brandy of the country. We had travelled the last two days entirely in the forest, passing many farm-houses, and several villages, and, as we believed, were now near our point of rendezvous. I kicked on the donkey before me, and smiled on Ulric. I would have carried his rifle, as well as my own, but his ardent temper and devoted love maintained him, and when I expressed any anxiety about his toil, he only laughed, and redoubled his pace.

We were pushing along an old turf road cut through the thick woods, when suddenly, at the end of a side vista, I beheld the tower of a castle. 'Jonsterna!' I shouted, and I ran forward without the

donkey. It was more distant than it appeared, but at length we came to a large piece of clear land, and at the other side of it we beheld the long-dreamt-of building. It was a vast structure, rather dilapidated than ruined. With delight, I observed a human being moving upon the keep, whom I recognised by his uniform to be one of us, and as we approached nearer we distinguished two or three of our comrades stretched upon the turf. They all jumped up and ran forward to welcome us. How heartily we shook hands, and congratulated each other on our re-union! More than half were already assembled. All had contrived, besides their own equipments, to bring something for the common stock. There was plenty of bread, and brandy, and game. Some were already

out collecting wood. Before noon the rest arrived, except Pahlen and his comrade. And they came at last, and we received them with a cheer, for the provident vice-president, like an ancient warrior, was seated in a cart. 'Do not suppose that I am done up, my boys,' said the gay dog, 'I have brought gunpowder.'

When we had all assembled we rushed into the castle, and in the true spirit of boyhood, examined everything. There was a large knight's-hall, covered with tapestry, and tattered banners. This was settled to be our chief apartment. We even found a huge oak table, and some other rude and ancient furniture. We appointed committees of examination. Some surveyed the cellars and dungeons, some the out-buildings. We were not afraid of ghosts, but

marvellously fearful that we might have been anticipated by some human beings, as wild, and less philosophical than ourselves. It was a perfect solitude. We cleared and cleaned out the hall, lighted an immense fire, arranged our stores, appointed their keeper, made beds with our cloaks, piled our arms, and cooked our dinner. An hour after sunset our first meal was prepared, and the Secret Union for the Amelioration of Society resumed their sittings almost in a savage state.

I shall never forget the scene, and the proud exultation with which I beheld it. The vast and antique hall, the mystic tapestry, moving and moaning with every gust of the windy night—the deep shades of the distant corners, the flickering light flung by the blazing hearth and the huge

pine torches, the shining arms, the rude but plenteous banquet, the picturesque revellers, and I their president, with my sword pressing on a frame ready to dare all things. 'This, this is existence,' I exclaimed. 'Oh! let us live by our own right arms, and let no law be stronger than our swords!'

I was even surprised by the savage yell of exultation with which my almost unconscious exclamation was received. But we were like young tigers, who, for a moment tamed, had now for the first time tasted blood, and rushed back to their own natures. A band of philosophers, we had insensibly placed ourselves in the most anti-philosophical position. Flying from the Feudal System, we had, unawares, taken refuge in its favourite haunt. All our

artificial theories of universal benevolence vanished. We determined to be what fortune had suddenly made us. We discarded the abstract truths which had in no age of the world ever been practised, and were, of course, therefore impracticable. We smiled at our ignorance of human nature and ourselves. The Secret Union for the Amelioration of Society suddenly turned into a corps of bandits, and their philosophical president was voted their captain.

IV.

It was midnight. They threw themselves upon their rough couches, that they might wake fresh with the morning. Fatigue and brandy in a few minutes made them deep slumberers, but I could not sleep. I flung a log upon the fire, and paced the hall in deep communion with my own thoughts. The rubicon was past. Farewell my father, farewell my step-country, farewell literary invention, maudlin substitute for a poetic life, farewell effeminate arts of morbid civilization! From this moment, I ceased to be a boy. I was surrounded by human beings, bold and trusty, who looked only to my command,

and I was to direct them to danger, and guide them through peril. No child's game was this, no ideal play. We were at war, and at war with mankind.

I formed my plans, I organized the whole system. Action must be founded on knowledge. I would have no crude abortive efforts. Our colossal thoughts should not degenerate into a frolic. Before we commenced our career of violence, I was determined, that I would have a thorough acquaintance with the country. Every castle, and every farm-house, should be catalogued. I longed for a map, that I might muse over it like a general. I looked upon our good arms with complacency. I rejoiced that most of us were cunning of fence. I determined that they should daily exercise with the broadsword, and

that each should become a dead shot with his rifle. In the perfection of our warlike accomplishments, I sought a substitute for the weakness of our numbers.

The morning at length broke. I was not the least fatigued. I longed to commence my arrangements. It grew very cold. I slept for an hour. I was the first awake. I determined in future to have a constant guard. I roused Pahlen. He looked fierce in his sleep. I rejoiced in his determined visage. I appointed him my lieutenant. I impressed upon him how much I depended upon his energy. We lighted an immense fire, arranged the chamber, and prepared their meal, before any woke. I was determined that their resolution should be supported by the comfort, which they found around them.

I felt that cold and hunger are great sources of cowardice.

They rose in high spirits. Everything seemed delightful. The morn appeared only a continuation of the enjoyment of the evening. When they were emboldened by a good meal, I developed to them my plans. I ordered Ulric de Brahe to be first on guard, a duty from which no one was to be exempt but Pahlen and myself. The post was the tower, which had given me the first earnest of their fealty in assembling. No one could now approach the Castle without being perceived, and we took measures, that the guard should be perfectly concealed. Parties were then ordered out in different directions, who were all to bring their report by the evening banquet. Pahlen alone was to repair to

a more distant town and to be absent four days. He took his cart, and we contrived to dress him as like a peasant as our wardrobe would permit. His purpose was to obtain different costumes which were necessary for our enterprise. I remained with two of my men, and worked at the interior arrangements of our dwelling.

Thus passed a week, and each day the courage of my band became more enflamed. They panted for action. We were in want of meal. I determined to attack a farmer's grange on the ensuing eve, and I resolved to head the enterprise myself. I took with me Ulric and three others. We arrived, an hour before sunset, at the devoted settlement. It had been already well reconnoitred. Robberies in this country were unknown. We

had to encounter no precautions. We passed the door of the granary, rifled it, stored our cart, and escaped without a dog barking. We returned two hours before midnight, and the excitement of this evening I never shall forget. All were bursting with mad enthusiasm. I alone looked grave, as if everything depended upon my mind. It was astonishing the influence, that this assumption of seriousness, in the midst of their wild mirth, already produced upon my companions. I was indeed their chief. They placed in me unbounded confidence, and almost viewed me as a being of another order.

I sent off Pahlen the next day in the disguise of a pedlar to a neighbouring village. The robbery was the tonic of uni-

versal conversation. Everybody was astounded, and no one was suspected. I determined, however, not to hazard in a hurry another enterprise in the neighbourhood. We wanted nothing except wine. Our guns each day procured us meat, and the farmer's meal was a plentiful source of bread. Necessity develops much talent. Already, one of our party was pronounced an excellent cook; and the last fellow in the world we should ever have suspected, put an old oven into perfect order, and turned out a most ingenious mechanic.

It was necessary to make a diversion in a distant part of the forest. I sent out my lieutenant with a strong party. They succeeded in driving home from a very rich farm four fine cows in milk. This was a great addition to our luxuries, and

Fahlen, remaining behind, paid in disguise an observatory visit to another village in the vicinity, and brought us home the gratifying intelligence, that it was settled, that the robbers were a party from a town far away on the other side of the forest.

These cases of petty plundering prepared my band for the deeper deeds, which I always contemplated. Parties were now out for days together. We began to be familiar with every square mile of country. Through this vast forest land, but much removed from the Castle, ran a high road on which there was great traffic. One evening, as Ulric and myself, were prowling in this neighbourhood, we perceived a band of horsemen approaching. They were cloth merchants, returning from a great fair, eight in number, but only one

or two armed, and merely with pistols. A cloth-merchant's pistol that had been probably loaded for years, and was borne, in all likelihood, by a man, who would tremble at its own fire, did not appear a very formidable weapon. The idea occurred to both of us simultaneously. We put on our masks, and one of us ran out of each side of the road, and seized the bridle of the foremost horseman. I never saw a man so astonished in my life. He was, perhaps, even more astonished than afraid. But we gave them no time. I can scarcely describe the scene. There was dismounting, and the opening of saddle-bags, and the clinking of coin. I remember wishing them good night in the civillest tone possible, and then we were alone.

I stared at Ulric, Ulric stared at me, and then we burst into a loud laugh, and danced about the road. I quite lost my presence of mind, and rejoiced, that no one but my favourite friend was present to witness my unheroic conduct. We had a couple of forest poncys, that we had driven home one day from a friendly farmer, tied up in an adjoining wood. We ran to them, jumped on, and scampered away without stopping for five or six hours, at least I think so, for it was an hour after sunset before the robbery was committed, and it was the last hour of the moon before we reached our haunt.

‘The Captain has come, the Captain has come,’ was a sound, that always summoned my band; fresh faggots were thrown on the fire, beakers of wine and brandy placed on

the tables. I called for Pahlen and my pipe, flung myself on my seat, and dashing the purses upon the board, 'Here,' said, 'my boys, here is our first gold.'

V.

THIS affair of the cloth merchants made us quite mad. Four parties were stopped in as many days. For any of our companions to return without booty, or what was much more prized, without an adventure, was considered flat treason. Our whole band was now seldom assembled. The travellers to the fair were a never-failing source of profit. Each day we meditated bolder exploits, and understanding that a wedding was about to take place

at a neighbouring castle, I resolved to surprise the revellers in their glory, and capture the bride.

One evening, as seated in an obscure corner of the hall, I was maturing my plans for this great achievement, and most of my companions were assembled at their meal, Pahlen unexpectedly returned. He was evidently much fatigued. He panted for breath, he was covered with sweat and dirt, his dress was torn and soiled, he reached the table with staggering steps, and seizing a mighty flask of Rhenish, emptied it at a draught.

‘Where is the captain?’ he anxiously inquired.

I advanced. He seized me by the arm, and led me out of the chamber.

‘A strong party of police and military

have entered the forest. They have taken up their quarters at a town not ten miles off. Their orders to discover our band are peremptory. Every spot is to be searched, and the castle will be the first. Not daring to return by our usual route, I have fought my way through the uncut woods. You must decide to-night. What will you do?’

‘ Their strength ? ’

‘ A company of infantry, a party of rangers, and a sufficiently stout body of police. Resistance is impossible.’

‘ It seems so.’

‘ And escape, unless we fly at once. To-morrow we shall be surrounded.’

‘ The devil ! ’

‘ I wish to heaven we were once more in your rooms, Fleming ! ’

‘Why, it would be as well! But, for heaven’s sake, be calm. If we quaver, what will the rest do? Let us summon our energies. Is concealment impossible? The dungeons?’

‘Every hole will most assuredly be searched.’

‘An ambush might destroy them. We must fight, if they run us to bay.’

‘Poh!’

‘Blow up the castle, then?’

‘And ourselves?’

‘Well?’

‘Heavens! what a madman you are! It was all you, Fleming, that got us in this infernal scrape. Why the devil should we become robbers, whom society has evidently intended only to be robbed?’

‘You are poignant, Pahlen. Come,

let us to our friends.' I took him, by the arm, and we entered the hall together.

'Gentlemen,' I said, 'my lieutenant brings important intelligence. A strong party of military and police have entered the forest to discover and secure us. They are twenty to one, and therefore too strong for open combat; the castle cannot stand an hour's siege, and an ambush, although it might prove successful, and gain us time, will eventually only render our escape more difficult, and our stay here impossible. I propose, therefore, that we should disperse for a few days, and before our departure, take heed that no traces of recent residence are left in this building. If we succeed in baffling their researches, we can again assemble here, or, which I conceive will be more prudent, and more practicable, meet

once more only to arrange our plans for our departure to another, and a more distant country. We have ample funds, we can purchase a ship. Mingling with the crew, as amateurs, we shall soon gain sufficient science. A new career is before us. The Baltic leads to the Mediterranean. Think of its blue waters, and beaming skies, its archipelagos, and picturesque inhabitants. We have been Bandits in a northern forest, let us now become Pirates on a southern sea !

No sympathetic cheer followed this eloquent appeal. There was a deep, dull, dead, dismal silence. I watched them narrowly. All looked with fixed eyes upon the table. I stood with folded arms. The foot of Pahlen nervously patting against the ground was the only sound.

At length, one by one, each dared to gaze upon another, and tried to read his fellow's thoughts. They could, without difficulty, detect the lurking, but terrible alarm.

‘Well, gentlemen,’ I said, ‘time presses, I still trust I am your Captain?’

‘Oh! Fleming, Fleazing,’ exclaimed the cook, with a broken voice and most piteous aspect, and dropping my title, which hitherto had been ‘scrupulously observed,’ ‘How can you go on so! It is quite dreadful!’

There was an assenting murmur.

‘I am sure,’ continued the artist, who I always knew was the greatest coward of the set, ‘I am sure I never thought it would come to this. I thought it was only a frolic. I have got led on, I am sure I do not know how. But you have such a

way! What will our fathers think? Robbers! How horrible! And then suppose we are shot! Oh, Lord! what will our mothers say! And after all we are only a parcel of boys, and did it out of fun. Oh! what shall I do?’

The grave look with which this comic ebullition was received, proved that the sentiments, however undignified in their delivery, were congenial to the band. The orator was emboldened by not being laughed at for the first time in his life, and proceeded—

‘I am sure I think we had better give ourselves up, and then our families might get us through. We can tell the truth. We can say we only did it for fun, and can give up the money, and as much more as

they like. I do not think they would hang us. Do you? Oh !'

'The devil take the hindmost,' said the young Count Bornholm, rising, 'I am off. It will go hard if they arrest me, because I am out sporting with my gun, and if they do, I will give them my name, and then I should like to see them stop me.'

'That will be best,' all eagerly exclaimed and rose. 'Let us all disperse, each alone with his gun.'

'Let us put out the fire,' said the cook ; 'they may see the light.'

'What, without windows?' said Bornholm.

'Oh ! these police see everything. What shall I do with the kettles? We shall all

get detected. To think it should come to this! Shot, perhaps hung! Oh!’

‘Throw everything down the well,’ said Pahlen, ‘money and all.’

Now I knew it was over. I had waited to hear Pahlen’s voice, and I now saw it was all up. I was not sorry. I felt the inextricable difficulties in which we were involved, and what annoyed me most was, that I had hitherto seen no mode of closing my part with dignity.

‘Gentlemen,’ I said, ‘as long as you are still within these walls, I am still your captain. You desert me, but I will not disgrace you. Fly then, fly to your schools and homes, to your affectionate parents, and your dutiful tutors. I should have known with whom I leagued myself. I at least am not a boy, and although now

a leader without followers, I will still, for the honour of my race, and of the world in which we breathe, I will still believe that I may find trustier bosoms, and pursue a more eminent career.'

Ulric de Brahe rushed forward and placed himself by my side,—'Fleming,' he said, 'I will never desert you !

I pressed his hand with the warmth it deserved, but the feeling of solitude had come over me. I wished to be alone. 'No, Ulric,' I replied, 'we must part. I will tie no one to my broken fortunes. And my friends all, let us not part in bitterness. Excuse me, if in a moment of irritation, I said aught that was unkind to those I love, depreciating to those whose conduct I have ever had cause to admire. Some splendid hours we have

past together, some brief moments of gay
 revel, and glorious daring, and sublime
 peril. We must part. 'I will believe,
 that our destiny, and not our will, sepa-
 rates us. My good sword,' I exclaimed,
 and I drew it from my scabbard, 'in
 future you shall belong to the bravest of
 the brave,' and, kissing it, I presented it to
 Pahlen. 'And now one brimming cup to
 the past. Pledge me all, and, in spite of
 every danger, with a merry face.'

Each man quaffed the goblet, till it was
 dry, and performed the supernaculum,
 and then I walked to a distant part of the
 hall, whispering, as I passed Pahlen,
 'See that every thing necessary is done.'

The castle well was the general recep-
 tacle for all our goods and plunder. In a
 few minutes the old hall presented almost

the same appearance as on our arrival. The fire was extinguished. Everything disappeared. By the light of a solitary torch, each man took his rifle, and his knapsack and his cloak, and then we were about to disperse. I shook hands with each. Ulric de Brahe lingered behind, and once more whispered his earnest desire to accompany me. But I forbade him, and he quitted me rather irritated.

I was alone. In a few minutes, when I believed that all had gone forth, I came out. Ere I departed, I stopped before the old Castle, and gazed upon it grey in the moonlight. The mighty pines rose tall and black into the dark blue air. All was silent. The beauty and the stillness blended with my tumultuous emotions, and in a moment dashed into poetry. Forgetting the

imminent danger in which my presence in this spot, even my voice, might involve me, I poured forth my passionate farewell to the wild scene of my wilder life. I found a fierce solace in this expression of my heart. I discovered a substitute for the excitement of action in the excitement of thought. Deprived of my castle and my followers, I fled to my ideal world for refuge. There I found them—a forest far wilder and more extensive, a castle far more picturesque and awful, a band infinitely more courageous and more true. My imagination supported me under my whelming mortification. Crowds of characters, and incidents, and passionate scenes, clustered to my brain. Again I acted, again I gave the prompt decision, again I supplied the never-failing expe-

didn't, again we revelled, fought, and plundered.

It was midnight, when wrapping himself in his cloak, and making a bed of fern, the late Lord of Jonsterna betook himself to his solitary slumber beneath the wide canopy of heaven.

VI.

I ROSE with the Sun, and the first thought that occurred to me was to write a tragedy. The Castle in the Forest, the Protean Pahlen, the tender-hearted Ulric, the craven cook, who was to be the traitor to betray the all-interesting and marvellous hero, myself—here was material. What soliloquies, what action, what variety of

character! I threw away my cloak; it wearied me, and walked on, waving my arm, and spouting a scene. I longed for the moment that I could deliver to an imperishable scroll these vivid creations of my fancy. I determined to make my way to the nearest town, and record these strong conceptions, ere the fire of my feelings died away. I was suddenly challenged by the advanced guard of a party of soldiers. 'They had orders to stop all travellers, and bring them to their commanding officer.' I accordingly repaired to their chief.

I had no fear as to the result. I should affect to be a travelling student, and, in case of any difficulty, I had determined to confide to the officer my name. But this was unnecessary. I went through my exa-

mirration with such a confident air, that nothing was suspected, and I was permitted to proceed. This was the groundwork for a new incident, and in the third act I instantly introduced a visit in disguise to the camp of the enemy.

I refreshed myself at a farm-house, where I found some soldiers billeted. I was amused with being the subject of their conversation, and felt my importance. As I thought, however, it was but prudent to extricate myself from the forest without any unnecessary loss of time, "I took my way towards its skirts, and continued advancing in that direction for several days, until I found myself in a country with which I was unacquainted. I had now gained the open country. Emerging from the straggling woodland one afternoon,

about an hour before sunset, I found myself in a highly cultivated and beautiful land. A small, but finely formed lake spread before me, covered with wild fowl. On its opposite side, rose a gentle acclivity richly wooded, and crowned by a magnificent castle. The declining sun shed a beautiful warm light over the proud building and its park, and gardens, and the surrounding land, which was covered with orchards, and small fields of tall golden grain.

The contrast of all this civilization and beauty, with the recent scene of my savage existence, was very striking. I leant in thought upon my rifle, and it occurred to me, that also, in my dark work, although indeed its characteristic was the terrible, there too should be something sunny, and

fresh, and fair. For if in nature, and in life, man finds these charges so delightful, so also should it be in the ideal and the poetic. And the thought of a heroine came into my mind. And while my heart was softened by the remembrance of woman, and the long-repressed waters of my passionate affections came gushing through the stern rocks that had so long beat them away, a fanciful and sparkling equipage appeared advancing at a rapid pace to the castle. A light and brilliant carriage, drawn by four beautiful grey horses, and the chasseur in a hussar dress, and the caracoling outriders, announced a personage of distinction. They advanced, the road ran by my feet. As they approached, I perceived that there was only a lady in the carriage. I could not distinguish much,

but my heart was prophetic of her charms. The carriage was within five yards of me. Never had I beheld so beautiful and sumptuous a creature. A strange feeling came over me, the carriage and the riders suddenly stopped, and its mistress, starting from her seat, exclaimed, almost shouted, 'Contarini! surely, Contarini!'

VII.

I RUSHED forward, I seized her extended hand, the voice called back the sweetness of the past, my memory struggled through the mist of many years—'Christiana!'

I had seen her once or twice since the golden age of our early loves, but not of late. I had heard too that she had mar-

ried, and heard it with a pang. Her husband, Count Norberg, I now learnt, was the lord of the castle before us. I gave a hurried explanation of my presence — a walking tour, a sporting excursion, anything did, while I held her sweet hand, and gazed upon her sparkling face.

I gave my gun and knapsack to an attendant, and jumped into the carriage. So many questions uttered in so kind a voice, I never felt happier. Our drive lasted only a few minutes, yet it was long enough for Christiana to tell me, a thousand times, how rejoiced she was to meet me, and how determined that I should be her guest.

We dashed through the castle gates. We alighted, I led her through the hall, up the lofty staircase, and into a suite of saloons. No one was there. She ran with

me up stairs, would herself point out to me my room, and was wild with glee. 'I have not time to talk now, Contarini. We dine in an hour. I will dress as fast as I can, and then we shall meet in the drawing room.'

I was alone, I threw myself into a chair, and uttered a deep sigh. It even surprised me, for I felt at this moment very happy. The servant entered with my limited wardrobe. I tried to make myself look as much like a man of the world, and as little like a bandit as possible; but I was certainly more picturesque than splendid. When I had dressed, I forgot to descend, and leant over the mantel-piece, gazing on the empty stove. The remembrance of my boyhood overpowered me. I thought of the garden in which we had first met, of

her visit to me in the dark to solace my despair ; I asked myself why, in her presence, everything seemed beautiful, and I felt happy ?

Some one tapped at the door. ‘ Are you ready ? ’ said the voice of voices. I opened the door, and, taking her hand, we exchanged looks of joyful love, and descended together.

We entered the saloon ; she led me up to a middle-aged but graceful personage, she introduced me to her husband, as the oldest and dearest of her friends. There were several other gentlemen in the room, who had come to enjoy the chace with their host, but no ladies. We dined at a round table, and I was seated by Christiana. The conversation ran almost entirely on the robbers, of whom I heard the most romantic

and ridiculous accounts. I asked the Countess how she should like to be the wife of a Bandit Chief?

‘I hardly know what I should do,’ she answered playfully, ‘were I to meet with some of those interesting ruffians of whom we occasionally read, but I fear, in this age of reality, these sentimental heroes would be difficult to discover.’

‘Yes, I have no doubt,’ said a young nobleman opposite, ‘that if we could detect this very captain, of whom we have daily heard such interesting details, we should find him to be nothing better than a decayed innkeeper, or a broken subaltern at the best.’

‘You think so?’ I replied. ‘In this age we are as prone to disbelieve in the extraordinary, as we were once eager to credit

it. ' I differ with you about the subject of our present discussion, nor do I believe him to be by any means a common character.'

My remark attracted general observation. I spoke in a confident, but slow and serious tone. I wished to impress on Christiana that I was no longer a child.

' But may I ask on what grounds you have formed your opinion?' said the Count.

' Principally upon my own observation,' I replied.

' Your own observation!' exclaimed my host. ' What! have you seen him?'

' Yes.'

They would have thought me joking, had I not looked so grave, but my serious air ill accorded with their smiles.

I was with him in the forest,' I continued, 'and had considerable conversation with him. I even accompanied him to his haunt, and witnessed his assembled band.'

'Are you serious!' all exclaimed. The Countess was visibly interested.

'But were you not very much frightened?' she inquired.

'Why should I be frightened?' I answered; 'a solitary student offered but poor prey. He would have passed me unnoticed, had I not sought his acquaintance, and he was a sufficiently good judge of human nature speedily to discover, that I was not likely to betray him.'

'And what sort of man is he?' asked the young noble. 'Is he young?'

'Very.'

'Well! I think this is the most extra-

ordinary incident that ever happened!" observed the Count.

"It is most interesting," added the Countess.

"Whatever may be his rank or appearance, it is all up with him by this time," remarked an old gentleman.

"I doubt it," I replied, mild but firm.

"Doubt it! I tell you what, if you were a little older, and knew this forest as well as I do, you would see that his escape is impossible. Never were such arrangements. There is not a square foot of ground that will not be scoured, and stations left on every cross road. I was with the commanding officer only yesterday. He cannot escape."

"He cannot escape," echoed a hitherto silent guest, who was a great sportsman.

‘I will bet any sum he is taken before the week is over.’

‘If it would not shock our fair hostess, Count Prater,’ I rejoined, ‘rest assured you should forfeit your stake.’

My host and his guests exchanged looks, as if to ask each other who was this very young man, who talked with such coolness on such very extraordinary subjects. But they were not cognizant of the secret cause of this exhibition. I wished to introduce myself as a man to the Countess. I wished her to associate my name with something of a more exalted nature than our nursery romance. I did not, indeed, desire that she should conceive that I was less sensible to her influence, but I was determined that she should feel her influence was exercised over no ordinary

being. I felt that my bold move had already in part succeeded. I more than once caught her eye, and read the blended feeling of astonishment and interest with which she listened to me.

‘Well! perhaps he may not be taken in a week,’ said the betting Count Prater; ‘it would be annoying to lose my wager by an hour.’

‘Say a fortnight, then?’ said the young nobleman.

‘A fortnight, a year, an age, what you please,’ I observed.

‘You will bet, then, that he will not be taken?’ asked Count Prater, eagerly.

‘I will bet that the expedition retires in despair,’ I replied.

‘Well! what shall it be?’ asked the Count, feeling he had an excellent bet, and

yet fearful, from my youthful appearance, our host might deem it but delicate to ensure its being a light one.

‘ Oh ! what you please,’ I replied ; ‘ I don’t bet, but when I do, I care not how high the stake may be.’

‘ Five, or fifty, or, if you please, five hundred dollars ? ’ suggested the Count.

‘ Five thousand, if you like.’

‘ We are very moderate men here, Baron,’ said our host with a smile, ‘ you University heroes frighten us.’

‘ Well, then,’ I exclaimed, pointing to the Countess’ left arm, ‘ you see this ruby bracelet ? the loser shall supply its fellow.’

‘ Bravo ! ’ said the young nobleman, and Prater was forced to consent.

A great many questions were now asked about the robbers, as to the nature and

situation of their haunt, their numbers, their conduct. To all these queries I replied with as much detail as was safe, but with the air of one, who was resolved not in any way to compromise the wild outlaws, who had recognised his claim to be considered a man of honour.

In the evening, the Count and his friends sat down to cards, and I walked up and down the saloon in conversation with Christiana. I found her manner to me greatly changed since the morning. She was evidently more constrained. Evidently she felt that, in her previous burst of cordiality, she had forgotten that time might have changed me more than it had her. I spoke to her little of home. I did not indulge in the details of domestic tattle. I surprised her by the wild and gloomy tone in which I men-

tioned myself and my fortunes. I mingled with my reckless prospect of the future, the bitterest sarcasms on my present lot, and when I almost alarmed her by my malignant misanthropy, I darted into a train of gay nonsense, or tender reminiscences, and piqued her by the easy and rapid mode in which my temper seemed to shift from morbid sensibility to callous mockery.

VIII.

I RETIRED to my room, I wrote a letter to my servant at the University, directing him to repair to Norberg Castle with my horses and wardrobe. The fire blazed brightly, the pen was fresh and brisk, the idea rushed into my head in a moment, and I com-

commenced my tragedy. I had already composed the first scene in my head. The plot was simple, and had been finally arranged while walking up and down the saloon with the Countess. A bandit chief falls in love with the wife of a rich noble, the governor of the province, which is the scene of his ravages. I sat up nearly all night in fervid composition. I wrote with greater facility than before, because my experience of life was so much increased, that I had no difficulty in making my characters think and act. There was indeed little art in my creation, but there was much vitality.

I rose very late, and found the chace had long ago called forth my fellow guests. I could always find amusement in musing over my next scene, and I sauntered forth,

almost unconscious of what I did. I found Christiana in a very fanciful flower garden. She was bending down, tending a favourite plant. My heart beat, my spirit seemed lighter, she heard my step, she raised her smiling face, and gave me a flower.

‘ Ah ! does not this remind you,’ I said, ‘ of a spot of early days ? I should grieve if you had forgotten the scene of our first acquaintance.’

‘ The dear garden-house,’ exclaimed Christiana, with an arch smile. ‘ Never shall I forget it. Oh ! Contarini, what a little boy you were then !’

We wandered about together, till the noon had long passed, talking of old times, and then we entered the castle for rest. She was as gay as a young creature in spring, but I was grave, though not gloomy.

I listened to her musical voice. I watched the thousand ebullitions of her beaming grace. I could not talk. I could only assent to her cheerful observations, and repose in peaceful silence, full of tranquil joy. The morning died away, the hunters returned, we re-assembled again to talk over their day's exploits, and speculate on the result of my bet with Count Prater.

No tidings were heard of the robbers; nearly every observation of yesterday was repeated. It was a fine specimen of rural conversation. They ate keenly, they drank freely, and I rejoiced when they were fairly seated again at their card-table, and I was once more with Christiana.

I was delighted when she quitted the harp, and seated herself at the piano. I

care little for a melodious voice, as it gives me no ideas, but instrumental music is a true source of inspiration, and as Christiana executed the magnificent overture of a great German master, I moulded my feelings of the morning into a scene, and when I again found myself in my room, I recorded it with facility, or only with a degree of difficulty with which it was exhilarating to contend.

At the end of three days my servant arrived, and gave me the first information, that myself and my recent companions were expelled, for which I cared as little as for their gold medal.

Three weeks flew away, distinguished by no particular incident, except the loss of his gage by Count Pratek, and my manifold care that he should redeem it. The

robbers could not in any manner be traced, although Jonsterna afforded some indications. The wonder increased, and was universal, and my exploits afforded a subject for a pamphlet, the cheapness of whose price the publisher earnestly impressed upon us could only be justified by its extensive circulation.

Three weeks had flown away, three sweet weeks, and flown away in the almost constant presence of Christiana, or in scarcely less delightful composition. My tragedy was finished. I resolved to return home, I longed to bring my reputation to the test, yet I lingered about Christiana

I lingered about her, as the young bird about the first, sunny fruit his inexperienced love dare not touch. I was ever with her, and each day grew more silent.

I joined her exhausted by composition. In her presence I sought refreshing solace, renewed inspiration. I spoke little, for one feeling alone occupied my being, and even of that I was not cognizant, for its nature to me was indefinite and indistinct, although its power was constant and irresistible. But I avenged myself for this strange silence when I was once more alone, and my fervid page teemed with the imaginary passion, of whose reality my unpractised nature was not even yet convinced.

One evening, as we were walking together in the saloon, and she was expressing her wish, that I would remain, and her wonder as to the necessity of my returning, which I described as so imperative, suddenly, and in the most unpreme-

dictated manner, I made her the confidant of my literary secret. I was charmed with the temper in which she received it, the deep and serious interest which she expressed in my success. 'Do you know,' she added, 'Contarini, you will think it very odd, but I have always believed you were intended for a poet.'

My sparkling eye, sparkling with hope and affection, thanked her for her sympathy, and it was agreed, that on the morrow, I should read to her my production.

I was very nervous when I commenced. This was the first time that my composition had been submitted to a human being, and now this submission was to take place in the presence of the author, and through the medium of his voice. As

I proceeded, I grew rather more assured. The interest which Christiana really found, or affected to find, encouraged me. If I hesitated, she said, 'Beautiful!'; whenever I paused, she exclaimed, 'Interesting!' My voice grew firmer, the interest which I myself took, banished my false shame, I grew excited, my modulated voice impressed my sentiments, and my action sometimes explained them. The robber scene was considered wonderful, and full of life and nature. Christiana marvelled, how I could have invented such extraordinary things and characters. At length I came to my heroine. Her beauty was described in an elaborate, and far too poetic passage. It was a perfect fac-simile of the Countess. It was ridiculous. She

herself felt it, and looking up, smiled with a faint blush.

I had now advanced into the very heart of the play, and the scenes of sentiment had commenced. I had long since lost my irresolution. The encouragement of Christiana, and the delight which I really felt in my writing, made me more than bold. I really acted before her. She was susceptible. All know how easy it is for a very indifferent drama, if well performed, to soften even the callous. Her eyes were suffused with tears, my emotion was also visible. I felt like a man brought out of a dungeon, and groping his way in the light. How could I have been so blind when all was so evident? It was not until I had recited to Christiana my fictitious

passion, that I had become conscious of my real feelings. I had been ignorant, all this time, that I had been long fatally in love with her. I threw away my manuscript, and seizing her hand, 'Oh, Christiana!' I exclaimed, 'what mockery is it thus to veil truth? Before you is the leader of the band of whom you have heard so much. He adores you.'

She started, I cannot describe the beautiful consternation of her countenance.

'Contarini,' she exclaimed, 'are you mad! what can you mean?'

'Mean!' I poured forth, 'Is it doubtful? Yes! I repeat, I am the leader of that band, whose exploits have so recently alarmed you. Cannot you now comprehend the story of my visiting their haunt? Was it probable, was it possible, that I

should have been permitted to gain their secret, and to retire? The robbers were youth like myself, weary of the dull monotony of our false, and wretched life. We have yielded to overwhelming force, but we have baffled all pursuit. For myself, I quit for ever a country I abhor. Ere a year has past, I shall roam a pirate on the far waves of the Ægean. One tie only binds me to this rigid clime. In my life, I have loved only one being. 'I look upon her. Yes! yes! it is you, Christiana. On the very brink of my exile, Destiny has brought us once more together. Oh! let us never part! Be mine, —be mine! Share with me my glory, my liberty, and my love!'

I poured forth this rhapsody with impassioned haste. The Countess stared

with blank astonishment. She appeared even alarmed. Suddenly, she sprang up, and ran out of the room.

IX.

I WAS enraged, and I was confused. I do not know whether I felt more shame or more irritation. My vanity impelled me to remain some time with the hope she would return. She did not, and seizing my tragedy I rushed into the Park. I met my servant exercising a horse. I sent him back to the castle alone, jumped on my steed, and in a few minutes was galloping along the high road to the metropolis.

It was about one hundred miles distant.

When I arrived home, I found that my father and the Baroness were in the country. I was not sorry to be alone, as I really had returned without any object, and had not, in any degree, prepared myself to meet my father. After some consideration, I inclosed my tragedy to a most eminent publisher, and I sent it him from a quarter whither he could gain no clue as to its source. I pressed him for a reply without unnecessary loss of time, and he, unlike these gentry, who really think themselves far more important personages than those by whose wits they live, was punctual. In the course of a week he returned me my manuscript, with his compliments, and an extract from the letter of his principal critic, in which my effusion was described as a laboured exaggeration

of the most unnatural features of the German school. The day I received this, my father also arrived.

He was alone, and had merely come up to town to transact business. He was surprised to see me, but said nothing of my expulsion, although, I felt confident, he must be aware of it. We dined together alone. He talked to me at dinner of indifferent subjects, of alterations at his castle, and the state of Europe. As I wished to conciliate him, I affected to take great interest in this latter topic, and I thought he seemed pleased with the earnest readiness with which I interfered in the discussion. After dinner, he remarked very quietly, filling his glass, "Had you communicated with me, Contatini, I could

perhaps have saved you the disgrace of expulsion.'

He was quite taken by surprise, and looked very confused. At last I said, 'I fear, Sir, I have occasioned you too often great mortification, but I sometimes cannot refrain from believing, that, I may yet make a return to you for all your goodness.'

'Everything depends upon yourself, Contarini. You have elected to be your own master. You must take the consequences of your courage, or your rashness. What are your plans? I do not know whether you mean to honour me with your confidence as a friend. I do not even aspire to the authority of a father.'

'Oh! pray, Sir, do not say so. I place myself entirely at your disposal. I desire

nothing more ardently than to act under your command. I assure you that you will find me a very different personage than you imagine. I am impressed with a most earnest and determined resolution to become a practical man. You must not judge of me by my boyish career. The very feelings that made me revolt at the discipline of schools, will insure my subordination in the world. I took no interest in their petty pursuits, and their minute legislation interfered with my more extended views.'

'What views?' asked my father with a smile.

I was somewhat puzzled, but I answered, 'I wish, Sir, to influence men.'

'But before you influence others, you must learn to influence yourself. Now

those who would judge, perhaps imperfectly, of your temperament, Contarini, would suppose, that its characteristic was a nature so headstrong and imprudent, that it could not fail of involving its possessor in many dangerous, and sometimes even in very ridiculous, positions.'

I was silent, with my eyes fixed on the ground.

'I think you have sufficient talents for all that I could reasonably desire, Contarini,' continued my father; 'I think you have talents indeed for anything; anything, I mean, that a rational being can desire to attain; but you sadly lack judgment. I think that you are the most imprudent person with whom I ever was acquainted. You have a great enemy, Contarini, a great enemy in yourself. You

have a great enemy in your Imagination. I think, if you could control your imagination, you might be a great man.

‘ It is a fatal gift, Contarini ; for when possessed in its highest quality and strength, what has it ever done for its votaries ? What were all those great poets of whom we now talk so much, what were they in their life-time ? The most miserable of their species.’ Depressed, doubtful, obscure, or involved in petty quarrels and petty persecutions, often unappreciated, utterly uninfluential, beggars, flatterers of men unworthy even of their recognition — what a train of disgusting incidents, what a record of degrading circumstances, is the life of a great poet ! A man of great energies aspires that they should be felt in his life-time, that his existence should be

rendered more intensely vital, by the constant consciousness of his multiplied and multiplying power. Is posthumous fame a substitute for all this? Viewed in every light, and under every feeling, it is alike a mockery. Nay, even try the greatest by this test, and what is the result? Would you sooner have been Homer or Julius Cæsar, Shakspeare or Napoleon? No one doubts. Moralists may cloud truth with every possible adumbration of cant, but the nature of our being gives the lie to all their assertions. We are active beings, and our sympathy, above all other sympathies, is with great action.

‘Remember, Contarini, that all this time I am taking for granted, that you may be a Homer. Let us now recollect, that it is perhaps the most improbable

'incident that can occur.' The high poetic talent—as if to prove that a poet is only, at the best, a wild, although beautiful, error of nature,—the high poetic talent is the rarest in creation. What you have felt is what I have felt myself, is what all men have felt: it is the consequence of our native and inviolate susceptibility. As you advance in life, and become more callous, more acquainted with man, and with yourself, you will find it, even daily, decrease. Mix in society, and I will answer that you lose your poetic feeling; for in you, as in the great majority, it is not a creative faculty originating in a peculiar organization, but simply the consequence of a nervous susceptibility, that is common to all.'

I suspected very much, that my father

had stumbled on the unhappy Romance of the wild Hunter of Rodenstein, which I had left lying about my drawers, but I said nothing. He proceeded—

‘ The time has now arrived, which may be considered a crisis in your life. You have, although very young, resolved that society should consider you a man. No preparatory situation can now veil your indiscretions. A youth at the University may commit outrages with impunity, which will affix a lasting prejudice on a person of the same age, who has quitted the University. I must ask you again, what are your plans?’

‘ I have none, Sir, except your wishes. I feel acutely the truth of all you have observed. I assure you I am as completely and radically cured of any predisposition

that, I confess, I once conceived I possessed for literary invention, as even you could desire. I will own to you, that my ambition is very great. I do not think that I should find life tolerable unless I were in an eminent position, and conscious that I deserved it. Fame, although not posthumous fame, is, I feel, necessary to my felicity. In a word, I wish to devote myself to ~~affairs~~—I attend only your commands.’

‘ If it meet your wishes, I will appoint you my private Secretary. The post, particularly when confirmed by the confidence which must subsist between individuals connected as we are, is the best school for public affairs. It will prepare you for any office.’

‘ I can conceive nothing more delightful.

You could not have fixed upon an appointment more congenial to my feelings. To be your constant companion, in the slightest degree to alleviate the burden of your labours, to be considered worthy of your confidence—this is all that I could desire. I only fear that my ignorance of routine may at first inconvenience you, but trust me, dear father, that if devotion, and the constant exertion of any talents I may possess, can aid you, they will not be wanting. Indeed, indeed, Sir, you never shall repent your goodness.'

This same evening I consigned my tragedy to the flames.

X.

I DEVOTED myself to my new pursuits with as much fervour as I had done to the study of Greek. The former secretary initiated me in the mysteries of routine business. My father, although he made no remark, was evidently pleased at the facility and quickness with which I attained this formal, but necessary information. Vattel and Martens were my private studies. I was greatly interested with my novel labours. Foreign policy opened a dazzling vista of splendid incident. It was enchanting to be acquainted with the secrets of European cabinets, and to control or influence their fortunes. A year passed

with more satisfaction than any period of my former life. I had become of essential service to my father. My talent for composition found full exercise, and afforded him great aid in drawing up state papers and manifestoes, despatches, and decrees. We were always together. I shared his entire confidence. He instructed me in the characters of the public men who surrounded us, and of those who were more distant. I was astonished at the scene of intrigue that opened on me. I found that in some even of his colleagues I was only to perceive secret enemies, and in others but necessary tools and tolerated incumbrances. I delighted in the danger, the management, the negotiation, the suspense, the difficult gratification of his high ambition.

Intent as he was to make me a great statesman, he was scarcely less anxious, that I should become a finished man of the world. He constantly impressed upon me that society was a politician's great tool, and the paramount necessity of cultivating its good graces. He afforded me an ample allowance. He encouraged me in a lavish expenditure. Above all, he was ever ready to dilate upon the character of women, and while he astonished me by the tone of depreciation in which he habitually spoke of them, he would even magnify their influence, and the necessity of securing it.

I modelled my character upon that of my father. I imbibed his deep worldliness. With my usual impetuosity, I even exaggerated it. I recognized self-interest as the spring of all action. I received it

as a truth, that no man was to be trusted, and no woman to be loved. I glories in secretly believing myself the most callous of men, and that nothing could tempt me to compromise my absorbing selfishness. I laid it down as a principle, that all considerations must yield to the gratification of my ambition. The ardour and assiduity with which I fulfilled my duties and prosecuted my studies, had rendered me, at the end of two years, a very skilful politician. My great fault; as a man of affairs, was, that I was too fond of patronising charlatans, and too ready to give every adventurer credit for great talents. The moment a man started a new idea, my active fancy conjured up all the great results, and conceived that his was equally prophetic. But here my father's severe judgment and

sharp experience always interfered for my benefit, and my cure was assisted by hearing a few of my black swans cackle, instead of chant. As a member of society, I was entirely exempt from the unskilful affectation of my boyhood. I was assured, arrogant, and bitter, but easy, and not ungraceful. The men trembled at my sarcasms, and the women repeated with wonderment my fantastic raillery. My position in life, and the exaggerated halo with which in my case, as in all others, the talents of eminent youth were injudiciously invested, made me courted by all, especially by the daughters of Eve. I was sometimes nearly the victim of hackneyed experience—sometimes I trifled with affections, which my parental instructions taught me never to respect. On the whole,

I considered myself as one of the most important personages in the country, possessing the greatest talents, the profoundest knowledge of men and affairs, and the most perfect acquaintance with society. When I look back upon myself at this period, I have difficulty in conceiving a more unamiable character.

XI

IN the third year of my political life, the prime minister suddenly died. Here was a catastrophe! Who was to be his successor? Here was a fruitful theme for speculation and intrigue. Public opinion pointed to my father, who indeed, if qualification for the post were only considered, had no

competitor ; but Baron Fleming was looked upon by his brother nobles with a jealous eye, and although not unwilling to profit by his labours, they were chary of permitting them too uncontrolled a scope. He was talked of as a new man : he was treated as scarcely national. The state was not to be placed at the disposal of an adventurer. He was not one of themselves. It was a fatal precedent, that the veins of the Prime Minister should be filled with any other blood but that of their ancient order. Even many of his colleagues did not affect to conceal their hostility to his appointment, and the Count de Moltke, who was supposed to possess every quality, that should adorn the character of a first minister, was openly announced as the certain successor to the vacant office. The Count

de Moltke was a frivolous old courtier, who had gained his little experience in long service in the household, and, even were he appointed, could only anticipate the practicability of carrying on affairs by implicit confidence in his rival. The Count de Moltke was a tool.

Skilful as my father was in controlling and veiling his emotion, the occasion was too powerful even for his firmness. For the first time in his life he sought a confidant, and, firm in the affection of a son, he confessed to me, with an agitation which was alone sufficient to express his meaning, how entirely he had staked his felicity on this cast. He could not refrain from bitterly dilating on the state of society, in which secret influence, and the prejudices of a bigoted class, should for a mo-

ment permit one, who had devoted all the resources of a high intellect to the welfare of his country, to be placed in momentary competition, still more in permanent inferiority with such an ineffable nonentity as the Count de Moltke.

Every feeling in my nature prompted me to energy. I counselled my father to the most active exertions, but although subtle, he was too cautious, and where he was himself concerned, even timorous. I had no compunction, and no fear. I would scruple at no means which could ensure our end. The feeling of society was, in general, in our favour. Even among the highest class, the women were usually on the side of my father. Baroness Engel, who was the evening star that beamed unrivalled in all our assemblies, and who

fancied herself a little Duchess de Longueville, delighted in a political intrigue. I affected to make her our confidante. We resolved together that the only mode was to render our rival ridiculous. I wrote an anonymous pamphlet in favour of the appointment of the Count de Moltke. It took in every body, until in the last page they read my panegyric of his cream cheeses. It was in vain that the Count de Moltke, and all his friends, protested that his Excellency had never made a cream cheese in the whole course of his life. The story was too probable not to be true. He was just the old fool who would make a cream cheese. I secured the channel of our principal journals. Each morning teemed with a diatribe against back-stairs influence, the prejudices of a nobility, who

were behind their age, and indignant histories of the maladministration of court favourites. The evening, by way of change, brought only an epigram, sometimes a song. The fashion took: all the youth were on our side. One day, in imitation of the Tre Giuli, we published a whole volume of epigrams, all on cream cheeses. The Baroness was moreover an inimitable caricaturist. The shops were filled with infinite scenes, in which a ludicrous old fribble, such as we might fancy a French marquis before the revolution, was ever committing something irresistibly ludicrous. In addition to all this, I hired ballad singers, who were always chaunting in the public walks, and even under the windows of the Palace, the achievements

of the unrivalled manufacturer of cream cheeses.

In the meantime, my father was not idle. He had discovered, that the Count de Bragnaes, one of the most influential nobles in the country, and the great supporter of De Moltke, was ambitious of becoming Secretary for foreign affairs, and that De Moltke had hesitated in pledging himself to this arrangement, as he could not perceive, how affairs could be carried on, if my father were entirely dismissed. My father opened a secret negotiation with De Bragnaes, and shook before his eyes the glittering seals he coveted. De Bragnaes was a dolt, but my father required only tools, and felt himself capable of fulfilling the duties of the whole mi-

nistry. This great secret was not concealed from me. I opposed the arrangement, not only because De Bragnacs was absolutely inefficient, but because I wished to introduce into the cabinet Baron Engel.

The post of chief minister had now been three weeks vacant, and the delay was accounted for by the illness of the sovereign, who was nevertheless in perfect health. All this excitement took place at the very season we were all assembled in the capital for the purposes of society. My father was everywhere, and each night visible. I contrasted the smiling indifference of his public appearance with the agonies of ambition, which it was my doom alone to witness.

I was alone with my father in his cabinet, when a royal messenger summoned

him to the presence. The King was at a palace about ten miles from the city. It did not in any way follow from the invitation, that my father was successful: all that we felt assured of was, that the crisis had arrived. We exchanged looks but not words. Intense as was the suspense, business prevented me from attending my father, and waiting in the royal antechamber to hear the great result. He departed.

I had to receive an important deputation, the discussion of whose wishes employed the whole morning. It was with extreme difficulty, that I could command my attention. Never in my life had I felt so nervous. Each moment a messenger entered, I believed that he was the important one. No carriage dashed into the court-

yard that did not to my fancy bear. my father.' At last, the deputation retired, and then came private interviews and urgent correspondence.

It was twilight. The servant had lit one burner of the lamp when the door opened, and my father stood before me. I could scarcely refrain from crying out. I pushed out the astonished waiting man, and locked the door.

My father looked grave, serious, I thought a little depressed. 'All is over,' thought I, and in an instant I began speculating on the future, and had created much, when my father's voice called me back to the present scene.

'His Majesty, Contarini,' said my father, in a dry, formal manner, as if he were speaking to one, who had never wit-

nessed his weakness—‘His Majesty has been graciously pleased to appoint me to the supreme office of President of his Council; and as a further mark of his entire confidence and full approbation of my past services, he has thought fit to advance me to the dignity of Count.’

Was this frigid form that stood unmoved before me, the being, whom, but four and twenty hours ago, I had watched trembling with his high passions? ‘Was this curt, unimpassioned tone, the voice, in which he should have notified the crowning glory of his fortunes to one, who had had so struggled in their behalf? I could scarcely speak. I hardly congratulated him.

‘And your late post, Sir?’ I at length enquired.

‘The seals of this office will be held by the Baron de Bragnaes.’

I shrugged my shoulders in silence.

‘The King is not less aware than myself that his Excellency can bring but a slight portion of intellectual strength to the new cabinet; that he is one indeed about to be placed in a position to discharge the duties of which he is incapable, but his Majesty, as well as myself, has unbounded confidence in the perfect knowledge, the energetic assiduity, and the distinguished talents, of the individual who will fulfil the duties of Under Secretary. He will be the virtual head of this great department. Allow me to be the first to congratulate Count Contarini Fleming on his new dignity, and his entrance into the service of his sovereign.’

I rushed forward, I seized his hand. 'My dear father,' I said, 'I am quite overwhelmed. I dreamt not of this. I never thought of myself, I thought only of you!'

He pressed my hand, but did not lose his composure. 'We dine together to-day alone,' he said, 'I must now see De Brag-naes. At dinner, I will tell you all. Nothing will be announced till to-morrow. Your friend, Engel, is not forgotten.'

He quitted the chamber. The moment he disappeared I could no longer refrain from glancing in the mirror. Never had I marked so victorious a visage. An unnatural splendour sparkled in my eye; my lip was impressed with energy, my nostril dilated with triumph. I stood before the tall mirror, and planted my foot, and

waved my arm. So much more impressive is Reality than Imagination !. Often, in reverie, had I been an Alberoni, a Ripperda, a Richelieu ; but never had I felt, when moulding the destinies of the wide globe, a tithe of the triumphant exultation, which was afforded by the consciousness of the simple fact, that I was an Under Secretary of State.

XII.

I HAD achieved by this time what is called a great reputation. I do not know that there was any one more talked of, and more considered in the country, than myself. I was my father's only confidant, and

secretly his only counsellor. I managed De Bragnès admirably, and always suggested to him the opinion, which I, at the same time, requested. He was a mere cipher. As for the Count de Moltke he was very rich, with an only daughter, and my father had already hinted, at what I had even turned in my own mind, an union with the wealthy, although not very pleasing, offspring of the maker of cream cheeses.

At this moment, in the zenith of my popularity and power, the Norbergs returned to the capital. I had never seen them since the mad morning, which, with all my boasted callousness, I ever blushed to remember, for the Count had, immediately after my departure, been appointed to a very important, although distant, government. Nor had I ever heard of them.

I never wished to. I drove their memory from my mind, but Christiana, who had many correspondents, and among them, the Baroness, had, of course, heard much of me.

Our family was the first they called upon, and, in spite of the mortifying awkwardness of the meeting, it was impossible to avoid it, and therefore I determined to pay my respects to them immediately. I was careful to call when I knew I could not be admitted, and the first interview finally took place at our own house. Christiana received me with the greatest kindness, although with increased reserve, which might be accounted for by the time that had elapsed since we last met, and the alteration that had since taken place both in my age and station. In all probability, she

looked upon my present career as a sufficient guarantee, that my head was cleared of the wild fancies of my impetuous boyhood, and rejoicing in this accomplishment, and anticipating our future and agreeable acquaintance, she might fairly congratulate herself on the excellent judgment which had prompted her to pass over in silence my unpardonable indiscretion.

Her manner put me so completely at my ease that, a moment after my salute, I wondered I could have been so foolish as to have brooded over it. The Countess was unaltered, except that she looked perhaps more beautiful. She was a rare creation that Time loved to spare. That sweet, and blooming, and radiant face, and that tall, and shapely, and beaming form—
 not a single bad passion had ever marred

their light and grace, all the freshness of an innocent heart had embalmed their perennial loveliness.

The party seemed dull. I, who was usually a great talker, could not speak. I dared not attempt to be alone with Christiana. I watched her only at a distance, and indicated my absorbing mood to others only by my curt and discouraging answers. When all was over, I retired to my own rooms exceedingly gloomy and dispirited.

I was in these days but a wild beast, who thought himself a civilized and human being. I was profoundly ignorant of all that is true and excellent. An unnatural system, like some grand violence of nature, had transformed the teeming and beneficent ocean of my mind into a sandy and arid desert. I had not then discovered

even a faint adumbration of the philosophy of our existence. Blessed by nature with a heart, that is the very shrine of sensibility, my infamous education had succeeded in rendering me the most selfish of my species.

But Nature, as the philosophic Winter impressed upon me, is stronger than Education, and the presence of this woman, this sudden appearance amid my corrupt, and heartless, and artificial life of so much innocence, and so much love, and so much simplicity, they fell upon my callous heart like the first rains upon a Syrian soil, and the refreshed earth responded to the kindly influence by an instant recurrence to its nature.

I recoiled with disgust from the thought of my present life; I flew back with rap-

ture to my old aspirations.' And the beautiful, for which I had so often, and so early sighed, and the love that I felt indispensable to my panting frame, and the deep sympathy for all creation that seemed my being, and all the dazzling and extending glory that had hovered, like a halo, round my youthful visions—they returned—they returned in their might and their splendour, and when I remembered what I was, I buried my face in my hands and wept.

I retired to my bed, but I could not sleep. I saw no hope, yet I was not miserable. Christiana could never be mine. I did not wish her to be. I could not contemplate such an incident. I had prided myself on my profligacy, but this night avenged my innate purity. I threw off my factitious passions. It was the innocence

of Christiana that exercised over me a spell so potent. Her unsophisticated heart awoke in me a passion for the natural and the pure. She was not made to be the heroine of a hackneyed adventure. To me she was not an individual, but a personification of Nature. I gazed upon her only as I would upon a beautiful landscape, with an admiring sympathy which ennobles my feelings, invigorates my intellect, and calls forth the latent poetry of my being.

The thought darted into my mind in a moment. I cannot tell how it came. It seemed inspiration, but I responded to it with an eager, and even fierce sympathy. Said I that the thought darted into my mind? Let me recall the weak phrase, let me rather say, that a form rose before me in the depth of the dull night, and that

form was myself. That form was myself, yet also another. I beheld a youth who, like me, had stifled the breathing forms of his young creation, who, like me, in the cold wilderness of the world, looked back with a mournful glance at the bright gates of the sweet garden of Fancy he had forfeited. I felt the deep and agonizing struggle of his genius and his fate, and my prophetic mind, bursting through all the thousand fetters that had been forged so cunningly to bind it in its cell, the inspiration of my nature, that beneficent daemon who will not desert those who struggle to be wise and good—tore back the curtain of the future, and I beheld, seated upon a glorious throne on a proud Acropolis, one to whom a surrounding and enthusiastic people offered a laurel crown. I laboured

to catch the fleeing features and the changing countenance of him who sat upon the throne. Was it the strange youth, or was it indeed myself?

I jumped out of bed. I endeavoured to be calm. I asked myself soberly, whether I had indeed seen a vision, or whether it were but the invisible phantasm of an ecstatic reverie? I looked round me; there was nothing. The moonbeam was stationary on the wall. I opened the window and looked out upon the vast, and cold, and silent street. The bitterness of the night cooled me. The pulsations of my throbbing head subsided. I regained my bed, and instantly sank into a sweet sleep.

The aunt of the Countess Fleming had died, and left to my step-dame the old Garden-house, which is not perhaps for-

gotten. As I had always continued on the best possible terms with the Countess, and, indeed, was in all points quite her standard of perfection, she had, with great courtesy, permitted me to make her recently-acquired mansion my habitation, when important business occasionally made me desire for its transaction a spot less subject to constant interruption than my office and my home.

To the Garden-house I repaired the next morning at a very early hour. I was so eager that I ordered, as I dismounted, my rapid breakfast, and in a few minutes, this being dispatched, I locked myself up in my room, giving orders not to be disturbed, except by a message from my father.

I took up a pen. I held it in the

light. I thought to myself what will be its doom, but I said nothing. I began writing some hours before noon, nor did I ever cease. My thoughts, my passion, the rush of my invention, were too quick for my pen. Page followed page; as a sheet was finished I threw it on the floor; I was amazed at the rapid and prolific production, yet I could not stop to wonder. In half a dozen hours I sank back utterly exhausted, with an aching frame. I rang the bell, ordered some refreshment, and walked about the room. The wine invigorated me and warmed up my sinking fancy, which however required little fuel. I set to again, and it was midnight before I retired to my bed.

The next day I again rose early, and, with a bottle of wine at my side, for I was

determined not to be disturbed, I dashed at it again. I was not less successful. This day I finished my first volume.

The third morning I had less inclination to write. I read over and corrected what I had composed. This warmed up my fancy, and in the afternoon I executed several chapters of my second volume.

Each day, although I had ~~not~~ in the least lost my desire of writing, I wrote slower. It was necessary for me each day to read my work from the beginning, before I felt the existence of the characters sufficiently real to invent their actions. Nevertheless on the morning of the seventh day, the second and last volume was finished.

My book was a rapid sketch of the development of the poetic character. My hero was a youth whose mind was ever

combating with his situation. Gifted with a highly poetic temperament, it was the office of his education to counteract all its ennobling tendencies. I traced the first indication of his predisposition, the growing consciousness of his powers, his reveries, his loneliness, his doubts, his moody misery, his ignorance of his art, his failures, his despair. I painted his agonising and ineffectual efforts to exist like those around him. I poured forth my own passion, when I described the fervour of his love.

All this was serious enough, and the most singular thing is, that all this time, it never struck me that I was delineating my own character. But now comes the curious part. In depicting the scenes of society in which my hero was forced to move, I suddenly dashed, not only into

the most slashing satire, but even into malignant personality. All the bitterness of my heart, occasioned by my wretched existence among their false circles, found its full vent. Never was anything so imprudent. Every body figured, and all parties and opinions alike suffered. The same hand that immortalised the ~~creatures~~ cheeses of poor Count de Moltke, now avenged his wrongs.

For the work itself, it was altogether a most crude performance, teeming with innumerable faults. It was entirely deficient in art. The principal character, although forcibly conceived, for it was founded on truth, was not sufficiently developed. Of course the others were much less so. The incidents were unnatural, the serious characters' exaggerations, the comic

ones caricatured; the wit was too often flippant, the philosophy too often forced; yet the vigour was remarkable, the license of an uncurbed imagination not without charms, and, on the whole, there breathed a freshness which is rarely found, and which perhaps, with all my art and knowledge, I may never again afford: and indeed—when I recall the magnificent enthusiasm, the glorious heat, with which this little work was written, I am convinced that, with all its errors, the spark of true creation animated its fiery page.

Such is the history of ‘*Mapstein*,’ a work which exercised a strange influence on my destiny.

XIII.

I PERSONALLY intrusted my novel to the same bookseller, to whom I had anonymously submitted my tragedy. He required no persuasion to have the honour of introducing it to the world, and had he hesitated, I would myself have willingly undertaken the charge, for I ~~was~~ resolved to undergo the ordeal. I swore him to the closest secrecy, and, as mystery is part of the craft, I had confidence that his interest would prompt him to maintain his honour.

ALL now being finished, I suddenly and naturally reassumed my obvious and usual character. The pouring forth had relieved my mind, and the strong feelings that had prompted it having subsided, I felt a little

of the lassitude that succeeds exertion. That reaction, to which ardent and inexperienced minds are subject, now also occurred. I lost my confidence in my effusion. It seemed impossible that anything I had written could succeed, and I felt that nothing but decided success could justify a person in my position to be an author. I half determined to recall the rash deposit, but a mixture of false shame and lingering hope, that I might yet be happily mistaken, dissuaded me. I resolved to think no more of it. It was an inconsiderate venture, but secrecy would preserve me from public shame, and as for my private mortification, I should at least derive from failure a beneficial conviction of my literary incompetency, and increased energy to follow up the path which fortune seemed

to destine for my pursuit. Official circumstances occurred also at this moment, which imperatively demanded all my attention, and which indeed interested my feelings in no ordinary degree.

The throne of my royal master had been guaranteed to him by those famous treaties which, at the breaking up of that brilliant vision, the French empire, ~~had been~~ vainly considered by the great European powers as insuring the permanent settlement of Europe. A change of dynasty had placed the king in a delicate position, but by his sage councils and discreet conduct the last burst of the revolutionary storm passed over without striking his diadem. One of the most distinguished instances of the ministerial dexterity of my father was the discovery of a latent inclination in certain

of our powerful allies to favour the interests of the abdicated dynasty, and ultimately to dispute the succession, which, at the moment, distracted by the multiplicity of important and engrossing interests, they deemed themselves too hastily to have recognised. In this conjuncture, an appeal to arms on our part was idle, and all to which ~~we~~ could trust in bringing about a satisfactory adjustment of this paramount question, was diplomatic ingenuity. For more than three years secret, but active negotiations had been on foot to attain our end, and circumstances had now occurred, which induced us to believe that, by certain combinations, the result might be realized.

I took a very great interest in these negotiations, and was the only person out

of the Cabinet to whom they were confided. The situation of the Prince Royal, himself a very accomplished personage, but whose unjust unpopularity offered no obstacle to the views of his enemies, extremely commanded my sympathy, the secrecy, importance, and refined difficulty of the transactions called forth all the play of my invention. Although an affair which, according to etiquette, should have found its place in the Foreign Office, my father, on his promotion, did not think it fitting to transfer a business of so delicate a nature to another functionary, and he contrived to correspond upon it with foreign courts in his character of first minister. As his Secretary, I had been privy to all the details, I continued therefore to assist him in the subsequent proceedings.

My father and myself materially differed, as to the course expedient to be pursued. He flattered himself that everything might be brought about by negotiation, in which he was indeed unrivalled, and he often expatiated to me on the evident impossibility of the king having recourse to any other measures. For myself, when I remembered the time that had already passed without in any way advancing our desires, and believed, which I did most firmly, that the conduct of the great Continental powers in this comparatively unimportant affair was only an indication of their resolution to promote the system on which they had based all their European relations—I myself could not refrain from expressing a wish to adopt a very different and far more earnest conduct.

In this state of affairs, I was one day desired by my father to attend him at a secret conference with the Ambassadors of the Great Powers. My father flattered himself, that he might this day obtain his long-desired end, and so interested was the monarch in the progress, as well as the result, of our consultations, that he resolved to be present himself, although incognito.

The scene of the conference was the same palace, whither my father had been summoned to receive the notification of his appointment as first minister. I can well recall the feelings with which, on the morning of the conference, I repaired to the palace with my father. We were muffled up in our pelisses, for the air was very sharp, but the sun was not without

influence, and shone with great brilliancy. There are times when I am influenced by a species of what I may term happy audacity, for it is a mixture of recklessness and self-confidence, which has a very felicitous effect upon the animal spirits. At these moments, I never calculate consequences, yet everything seems to go right.* I feel in good fortune—the ludicrous side of everything occurs to me,—I think of nothing but grotesque images,—I astonish people by bursting into laughter, apparently without a cause. Whatever is submitted to me, I turn into ridicule. I shrug my shoulders, and speak epigrams.

** I was in one of these moods to-day. My father could not comprehend me. He was very serious, but instead of sympathising with all his grave hopes and dull

fears, I did nothing but ridicule their Excellencies, whom we were going to meet, and perform to him an imaginary conference, in which he also figured.

We arrived at the palace. I became a little sobered. My father went to the King. I entered a large Gothic Hall, where the conference was to take place. It was a fine room hung with trophies, and principally lighted by a large Gothic window. At the farther end, near the fire, and portioned off by a large Indian screen, was a round table, covered with green cloth, and surrounded by seats. The Austrian Minister arrived. I walked up and down the Hall with him for some minutes, ridiculing diplomacy. He was one of those persons, who believe you have a direct object in everything you say, and

my contradictory opinions upon all subjects were to him a fruitful source of puzzled meditation. He thought that I was one whose words ought to be marked, and I believe that my nonsense has often occasioned him a sleepless night. The other ministers soon assembled, and in a few minutes, a small door opened at the top of the hall, and the King and my father appeared. We bowed, and took our seats. I, being the Secretary, seated myself at the desk, to take notes for the drawing up of the Protocols.

We believed, that the original idea of considering the great treaties as only a guarantee to the individual, and not to his successors, originated at Vienna. Indeed it was the early acquaintance of my father with the Austrian Minister, that

first assisted him in ascertaining this intention. We believed, that the Russian Cabinet had heartily entered into this new reading, that Prussia supported it only in deference to the Court of St. Petersburg, and that France was scarcely reconciled to the proposed derangement by the impression, that it materially assisted those principles of government by a recurrence to which the Cabinet of Versailles then began to be convinced they could alone maintain themselves.

Such had been our usual view of the state of opinion with respect to this question. It had been the object of my father to induce the French Court to join with that of St. James's in a strong demonstration in favour of the present system, and to indicate, in the event of that demon-

stration being fruitless, the possibility of their entering with the King into a tripartite treaty, framed in pursuance of the spirit of the invalidated one. He trusted that to-day this demonstration would be made.

We entered into business. The object of our opponents was to deny, that the tendency of certain acts, of which we complained, was inimical to the present dynasty, but to refrain from proving their sincerity by assenting to a new guarantee, on the plea that it was unnecessary, since the treaties must express all that was intended. Hours were wasted in multiplied discussions, as to the meaning of particular clauses in particular treaties, and as to precedents to justify particular acts. Hours were wasted, for we did not ad-

vance. At length, my father recurred to the spirit, rather than the letter, of the affair, and in urging the necessity for the peace of Europe, and other high causes, that this affair should be settled without delay, he gave an excellent opportunity for the friends he had anticipated to come forward. They spoke, but indeed it was very vague, and unsatisfactory. I marked the lip of the Austrian Minister curl, as if in derision, and the Russian arranged his papers, as if all now were finished.

I knew my father well enough by this time to be convinced, that, in spite of his apparently unaltered mien, he was bitterly disappointed and annoyed. The King looked gloomy. There was a perfect silence. It was so awkward, that the Austrian Ministers inquired of me the date

of a particular treaty, merely to break the dead pause. I did not immediately answer him.

The whole morning my fancy had been busied with the most grotesque images. I had never been a moment impressed with the gravity of the proceedings. The presence of the King alone prevented me from constant raillery. When I recollected the exact nature of the business on which we were assembled, and then called to mind the characters who took part in the discussion, I could scarcely refrain from laughter. 'Voltaire would soon settle this,' I thought, 'and send Messieurs the Austrian, and the Russian, and the Prussian, with their mustachios, and hussar jackets, and furs, to their own country. What business have they to interfere with

ours?' I was strongly impressed with the tyrannical injustice, and wicked folly, of the whole transaction. The great diplomatists appeared to me so many wild beasts ready to devour our innocent lamb of a sovereign, parleying only from jealousy who should first attack him.

The Austrian Minister repeated his question as to the treaty. 'It matters not,' I replied, 'let us now proceed to business.' He looked a little surprised. 'Gentlemen,' I continued, 'you must be quite aware, that this is the last conference his Majesty can permit us to hold upon a subject, which ought never to have been discussed. The case is very simple, and demands but little consideration. If the guarantee, we justly require, be not granted, his Majesty must have recourse

to a popular appeal. We have no fear about the result. We are prepared for it. His Majesty will acquire a new, and, if possible, a stronger title to his crown, and see what you will occasion by your squeamishness to authenticate the right of a sovereign, who, although not the offspring of a dynasty, acquired his throne not by the voice of the people, and has been constantly recognised by all your Courts;—you will be the direct cause of a most decided democratic demonstration in the election of a king by the people alone. For us, the result has no terrors. Your Excellencies are the best judges, whether your royal Masters possess any territories in our vicinity, which may be inoculated with our dangerous example.

I was astounded by my audacity. Not

till I had ceased speaking had I been aware of what I had dared to do. Once I shot a rapid glance at my father. His eyes were fixed on the ground, and I thought he looked a little pale. As I withdrew my glance, I caught the King's fiery eye, but its expression did not discourage me.

It is difficult to convey an idea of the success of my boldness. It could not enter the imagination of the diplomatists, that any one could dare to speak, and particularly under such circumstances, without instructions and without authority. They looked upon me only as the mouth-piece of the Royal intentions. They were alarmed at our great, and unwonted, and unexpected resolution, at the extreme danger and invisible results of our purposes. The English and French ministers, who watched

every turn, made a vehement representation in our favour, and the conference broke up with an expression of irresolution and surprise in the countenances of our antagonists, quite unusual with them, and which promised the speedy attainment of the satisfactory arrangement, which shortly afterwards took place.

The conference broke up, my father retired with the King, and desired me to wait for him in the hall. I was alone. I was excited. I felt the triumph of success. I felt that I had done a great action. I felt all my energies. I walked up and down the hall in a phrensy of ambition, and I thirsted for action. There seemed to me no achievement of which I was not capable, and of which I was not ambitious. In imagination I shook thrones and founded

empires. I felt myself a being born to breathe in an atmosphere of Revolution.

My father came not. Time wore away, and the day died. It was one of those stern, sublime sunsets, which is almost the only appearance in the north in which nature enchanted me. I stood at the window gazing on the burnished masses that, for a moment, was suspended, in their fleeting and capricious beauty, on the far horizon. I turned aside and looked at the rich trees suffused with the crimson light, and ever and anon irradiated by the dying shoots of a golden ray. The deer were stealing home to their bowers, and I watched them till their golden and glancing forms gradually lost their lustre in the declining twilight. The glow had now departed, and all grew dim. A solitary star alone

was shining in the grey sky, a bright and solitary star.

And as I gazed upon the sunset, and the star, and the dim beauties of the coming eve, my mind grew calm. And all the bravery of my late reverie passed away. And I felt indeed a disgust for all the worldliness on which I had been late pondering. And there arose in my mind a desire to create things beautiful as that golden sun, and that glittering star.

I heard my name. The hall was now darkened. In the distance stood my father. I joined him. He placed his arm affectionately in mine, and said to me, "My son, you will be Prime Minister of * * * * ; perhaps something greater."

XIV.

As we drove home, everything seemed changed since the morning. My father was in high spirits, for him, even elated: I, on the contrary, was silent and thoughtful. This evening there was a ball at the Palace, which, although little inclined, I felt obliged to attend.

I arrived late, the King was surrounded by a brilliant circle, and conversing with his usual felicitous affability. I would have withdrawn, when I had made my obeisance, but his Majesty advanced a step and immediately addressed me. He conversed with me for some time. Few men possess a more captivating address than

this sovereign. It was difficult, at all times, not to feel charmed, and now I was conscious that this mark of his favour recognized no ordinary claims to his confidence. I was the object of admiring envy. That night there were few in those saloons, crowded with the flower of the land, who did not covet my position. I alone was insensible to it. A vision of high mountains and deep blue lakes mingled with all the artificial splendour that dazzled around. I longed to roam amid the solitude of Nature, and disburthen a mind teeming with creative sympathy.

I drew near a group which the pretty Baroness Engel was addressing with more than her usual animation. When she caught my eye, she beckoned me to join

her, and said, 'Oh! Count Contarini, have you read Manstein?'

'Manstein,' I said in a careless tone,
'What is it?'

'Oh! you must get it directly. The oddest book that ever was written. We are all in it, we are all in it.'

'I hope not.'

'Oh, yes! all of us, all of us. I have not had time to make out the characters, I read it so quickly. My man only sent it to me this morning. I must get a key. Now you who are so clever, make me one.'

'I will look at it, if you really recommend me.'

'You must look at it. It is the oddest book that was ever written. Immensely clever, I assure you, immensely clever. I cannot exactly make it out.'

‘That is certainly much in its favour. The obscure, as you know, is a principal ingredient of the sublime.’

‘How odd you are! But really now, Count Contarini, get Manstein. Every one must read it. As for your illustrious principal, Baron de Bragnaes—he is really hit off to the life.’

‘Indeed!’ I said with concealed consternation.

‘Oh! no one can mistake it. I thought I should have died with laughing. But we are all there. I am sure I know the author.’

‘Who is it? who is it?’ eagerly inquired the group.

‘I do not know, mind,’ observed the Baroness. ‘It is a conjecture, merely a

conjecture. But I always find out everybody.'

'Oh! that you do,' said the group.

'Yes, I find them out by the style.'

'How cleyer you are!' exclaimed the group, 'but who is it?'

'Oh! I shall not betray him. Only I am quite convinced I know who it is.'

'Pray, pray tell us,' intreated the group.

'You need not look around, Matilda, he is not here. A friend of yours, Contarini. I thought that young Moskovsky was in a great hurry to run off to St. Petersburg. And he has left us a legacy. We are all in it, I assure you,' she exclaimed to the one nearest, in an under, but decisive tone.

I breathed again. 'Young Moskovsky!

'To be sure it is,' I observed with an air of thoughtful conviction.

'To be sure it is. Without reading a line, I have no doubt of it. I suspected that he meditated something. I must get Manstein directly, if it be by young Moskoffsky. Anything that young Moskoffsky writes, must be worth reading. What an excellent letter he writes! You are my oracle, Baroness Engel, I have no doubt of your discrimination, but I suspect that a certain correspondence with a brilliant young Muscovite has assisted you in your discovery.'

'Be contented,' rejoined the Baroness, with a smile of affected mystery and pique, 'that there is one who can enlighten you, and be not curious as to the source. Ah!

there is Countess Norberg ; how well she looks to-night !

I walked away to salute Christiana. As I moved through the elegant crowd my nervous ear constantly caught half phrases, which often made me linger. Very satirical—very odd—very personal—very odd, indeed—what can it all be about? Do you know? No, I do not.—Do you? Baroness Engel—all in it—must get it—very witty—very flippant. Who can it be?—Young Moskoffsky. Read it at once without stopping—never read anything so odd—ran off to St. Petersburg—always thought him very clever. Who can the Duke of Twaddle mean? Ah! to be sure—I wonder it did not occur to me.

I joined Christiana. I waltzed with her. I was on the point, once or twice,

of asking her if she had read 'Manstein,' but did not dare. After the dance we walked away. Mademoiselle de Moltke, who, although young, was not charming, but very intellectual, and who affected to think me a great genius, because I had pasquinaded her father, stopped us.

'My dear Countess, how do you do? You look most delightfully to-night. Count Contarini, have you read Manstein? You never read anything! How can you say so! but you always say such things. You must read Manstein. Everybody is reading it. It is full of imagination, and very personal, very personal indeed. Baroness Engel says we are all in it. You are there. You are Horace de Beaufort, who thinks everything, and everybody, a bore—exactly like you, Count, exactly—

what I have always said of you. Adieu ! Mind you get Manstein, and then come and talk it over with me. Now do, that's a good creature !'—And this talkative Titania tripped away.

'You are wearied, Christiana, and these rooms are insufferably hot. You had better sit down.'

We seated ourselves in a retired part of the room. I observed an unusual smile upon the face of Christiana. Suddenly she said, with a slight flush, and not without emotion, 'I shall not betray you, Contarini,' but I am convinced that you are the author of Manstein.'

I was very agitated—I could not immediately speak. I was ever different to Christiana to what I was to other people. I could not feign to her. I could not dis-

sembie. My heart always opened to her, and it seemed to me almost blasphemy to address her in any other language but truth.

‘ You know me better than all others, Christiana. Indeed, you alone know me. But I would sooner hear that any one was considered the author of *Manstein* than myself.’

‘ You need not fear that I shall be indiscreet, but rest assured it cannot long be a secret.’

‘ Indeed !’ I said. ‘ Why not ?’

‘ Oh ! Contarini, it is too like.’

‘ Like whom ?’

‘ Nay ! you affect ignorance.’

‘ Upon my honour, Christiana, I do not. Have the kindness to believe that there is at least one person in the world to whom I

am not affected. If you mean that Manstein is a picture of myself, I can assure you most solemnly, that I never less thought of myself than when I drew it. I thought it was an ideal character.'

'It is that very circumstance that occasions the resemblance, for you, Contarini, whatever you may appear in this room, you are an ideal character.'

'You have read it?' I asked.

'I have read it,' she answered, seriously.

'And you do not admire it? I feel you do not. Nay! conceal nothing from me, Christiana. I can bear truth.'

'I admire its genius, Contarini. I wish that I could speak with equal approbation of its judgment. It will, I fear, make you many enemies.'

'You astonish me, Christiana. I do

not care for enemies. I care for nobody, but for you. But why should it make me enemies?’

‘I hope I am mistaken. It is very possible I am mistaken. I know not why I talk upon such subjects. It is foolish—it is impertinent, but the interest, the deep interest, I have always taken in you, Contarini, occasions this conversation, and must excuse it.’

‘Dear Christiana, how good, how very good you are!’

‘And all these people whom you have ridiculed—surely, Contarini, you have enough already who envy you—surely, Contarini, it was most imprudent.’

‘People ridiculed! I never meant to ridicule any person in particular. I wrote with rapidity. I wrote of what I had

seen and what I felt. There is nothing but truth in it.'"

"You are not in a position, Contarini, to speak truth."

"Then I must be in a very miserable position, Christiana."

"You are what you are, Contarini. All must admire you. You are in a very envied, I will hope a very enviable position."

"Alas! Christiana, I am the most miserable fellow that breathes upon this broad world."

She was silent.

"Dearest Christiana," I continued, "I speak to you as I would speak to no other person. Think not that I am one of those who deem it interesting to be considered unhappy. Such trifling I despise. What I,

say to you, I would not confess to another human being. Among these people, my vanity would be injured to be considered miserable. But I am unhappy, really unhappy, most desolately wretched. En-
viable position! But an hour since I was meditating how I could extricate myself from it! Alas! Christiana, I cannot ask you for counsel, for I know not what I desire, what I could wish, but I feel, each hour I feel more keenly, and never more keenly than when I am with you, that I was not made for this life, nor this life for me.'

'I cannot advise you, Contarini. What, what can I advise? But I am unhappy to find that you are. I grieve, I grieve deeply, that one apparently with all that can make him happy, should still miss

· felicity. You are yet very young, Contarini, and I cannot but believe that you will still attain all you desire, and all that you deserve.’

‘ I desire nothing. I know not what I want. All that I know is, that what I possess I abhor.’

‘ Ah ! Contarini, beware of your Imagination.’

XV.

THE storm, that had been apprehended by the prescient affection of Christiana, surely burst. I do not conceive, that my publisher betrayed me. I believe internal evidence settled the affair. In a fortnight, it was acknowledged by all, that I was the author of 'Manstein,' and all were surprised, that this authorship could, for a moment, have been a question. I can give no idea of the outcry. Everybody was in a passion, or affected to be painfully sensitive of their neighbours' wrongs. The very personality was ludicrously exaggerated. Everybody took a delight in detecting the originals of my portraits.

Various keys were handed about; all different, and not content with recognizing the very few decided sketches from life there really were, and which were sufficiently obvious and not very malignant, they mischievously insisted, that not a human shadow glided over my pages, which might not be traced to its substance, and protested that the Austrian Minister was the model of an old woman.

Those, who were ridiculed, insisted, that the ridicule called in question the very first principles of society. They talked of confidence violated, which never had been shared, and faith broken, which never had been pledged. Never was so much nonsense talked about nothing, since the days of the schoolmen. But nonsense, when earnest, is impressive, and some

times takes you in. If you are in a hurry, you occasionally mistake it for sense. All the people, who had read 'Manstein,' and been very much amused with it, began to think they were quite wrong, and that it was a very improper and wicked book, because this was daily reiterated in their ears, by half a dozen bores, who had gained an immortality, which they did not deserve. Such conduct it was universally agreed must not be encouraged. Where would it end? Everybody was alarmed. Men passed me in the street without notice, I received anonymous letters, and even many of my intimates grew cold. As I abhor explanations, I said nothing; and although I was disgusted with the folly of much that I heard, I contradicted nothing, however ridiculously

false, and felt confident that, in time, the world would discover, that they had been gulled into fighting the battle of a few individuals, whom they despised. I found even a savage delight in being an object, for a moment, of public astonishment, and fear, and indignation. But the affair getting at last troublesome, I fought young De Bragnacs with swords in the Deer Park, and having succeeded in pinning him, it was discovered, that I was more amiable. For the rest, out of my immediate circle the work had been from the first decidedly successful.

In all this, not very agreeable affair, I was delighted by the conduct of Christiana. Although she seriously disapproved of what was really objectionable in 'Manstein,' and although she was of so modest

and quiet a temper, that she unwillingly exercised that influence in society, to which her rank, and fortune, and rare accomplishments entitled her, she suddenly became my most active and violent partizan, ridiculed the pretended wrongs and mock propriety that echoed around her, and declaring that the author of 'Manstein' had only been bold enough to print that, which all repeated, rallied them on their hypocrisy. Baroness Engel also was faithful, although a little jealous of the zeal of Christiana," and between them, they laughed down the cabal, and so entirely turned the public feeling, that in less than a month, it was universally agreed, that 'Manstein' was a most delightful book, and the satire, as they daintily phrased it, 'perfectly allowable.'

Amid all this tumult, my father was silent. From his look, from no expression of his, could I gain a hint either of his approval, or his disapprobation. I could not ascertain even if he had seen the book. The Countess Fleming of course read it immediately, and had not the slightest conception of what it was about. When she heard it was by me, she read it again, and was still more puzzled, but told me she was delighted. When the uproar took place, instead of repeating, which she often did, all the opinions she had caught, she became quite silent, and the volumes disappeared from her table. The storm blew over, and no bolt had shivered me, and the volumes crept forth from their mysterious retirement.

About two months after the publication.

of 'Mainstein,' appeared a new number of the great 'critical journal' of the north of Europe. One of the works reviewed, was my notorious production. I tore open the leaves with a blended feeling of desire and fear, which I can yet remember. I felt prepared for the worst. I felt that such grave censors, however impossible it was to deny the decided genius of the work, and however eager they might be to hail the advent of an original mind, I felt that it was but reasonable, and just, that they should disapprove of the temper of the less elevated portions, and somewhat dispute the moral tendency of the more exalted.

With what horror, with what blank despair, with what supreme, appalling astonishment, did I find myself, for the

first time in my life, a subject of the most reckless, the most malignant, and the most adroit ridicule. I was scarified—I was scalped. They scarcely condescended to notice my dreadful satire, except to remark, in passing, that, by the bye, I appeared to be as ill-tempered as I was imbecile. But all my eloquence, and all my fancy, and all the strong expression of my secret feelings—these ushers of the Court of Apollo fairly laughed me off Parnassus, and held me up to public scorn, as exhibiting the most lamentable instance of mingled pretension and weakness, and the most ludicrous specimen of literary delusion, that it had ever been their unhappy office to castigate, and, as they hoped, to cure.

The criticism fell from my hand.—A film floated over my vision, my knees trembled. I felt that sickness of heart,

that we experience in our first serious scrape. I was ridiculous." It was time to die.

What did it signify? What was authorship to me? What did I care for their flimsy fame,—I, who yet not of age, was an important functionary of the state, and who might look to its highest confidence and honours. It was really too ludicrous. I tried to laugh. I did smile very bitterly. The insolence of these fellows! Why! if I could not write, surely I was not a fool. I had done something. Nobody thought me a fool. On the contrary, everybody thought me a rather extraordinary person. What would they think now? I felt a qualm.

I buried my face in my hands. I summoned my thoughts to their last struggle. I penetrated into my very soul,

—and I felt the conviction, that literary creation was necessary to my existence, and that for it I was formed. And all the beautiful and dazzling forms, that had figured in my youthful visions, rose up before me, crowned monarchs, and radiant heroes, and women brighter than day, but their looks were mournful, and they extended their arms with deprecating anguish, as if to entreat me not to desert them. And in the magnificence of my emotions, and the beauty of my visions, the worldly sarcasms that had lately so shaken me, seemed something of another, and a lower, existence, and I marvelled, that, for a moment, this thin transient cloud could have shadowed the sunshine of my soul. And I arose, and I lifted up my arm to heaven, and waved it like

a banner, and I swore by the Nature, that I adored, that in spite of all opposition, I would be an author, ay! the greatest of authors, and that far climes, and distant ages, should respond to the magic of my sympathetic page.

The agony was past. I mused in calmness over the plans that I should pursue. I determined to ride down to my father's castle, and there mature them in solitude. Haunt of my early boyhood, fragrant bower of Egeria, sweet spot where I first scented the bud of my spring-like fancy, willingly would I linger in thy green retreats, no more to be wandered over by one who now feels that he was ungrateful to thy beauty!

Now that I had resolved, at all costs, to quit my country, and to rescue myself

from the fatal society in which I was placed, my impartial intelligence, no longer swayed by the conscious impossibility of emancipation, keenly examined, and ascertained the precise nature and condition of my character. I perceived myself a being educated in systematic prejudice. I observed that I was the slave of custom, and never viewed any incident in relation to man in general, but only with reference to the particular and limited class of society, of which I was a member. I recognized myself as selfish and affected. I was entirely ignorant of the principles of genuine morality, and I deeply felt that there was a total want of nature in everything connected with me. I had been educated without any regard to my particular or to my general nature; I had nothing to

assist me in my knowledge of myself, and nothing to guide me in my conduct to others. The consequence of my unphilosophical education was my utter wretchedness.

I determined to re-educate myself. Conceiving myself a poet, I resolved to pursue a course, which should develop, and perfect, my poetic power; and never forgetting that I was a man, I was equally earnest, in a study of human nature, to discover a code of laws, which should regulate my intercourse with my fellow-creatures. For both these sublime purposes, it was necessary that I should form a comprehensive acquaintance with nature in all its varieties and conditions; and I resolved therefore to travel. I intended to detail all these feelings to my father, to

conceal nothing from him, and request his approbation and assistance. In the event of his opposition, I should depart without his sanction, for to depart I was resolved.

I remained a week at the Castle, musing over these projects, and entirely neglecting my duties, in the fulfilment of which, ever since the publication of 'Manstein,' I had been very remiss. Suddenly, I received a summons from my father to repair to him without a moment's delay.

I hurried up to town, and hastened to his office. He was not there, but expecting me at home. I found him busied with his private secretary, and apparently very much engaged. He dismissed his secretary immediately, and then said, 'Contarini, they are rather troublesome in Norway: I leave town instantly for Bergen

with the King. I regret it, because we shall not see each other for some little time. His Majesty has had the goodness, Contarini, to appoint you Secretary of Legation at the Court of London. Your appointment takes place at once, but I have obtained you leave of absence for a year. You will spend this, attached to the Legation at Paris. I wish you to be well acquainted with the French people before you join their neighbours. In France and England, you will see two great practical nations. It will do you good. I am sorry, that I am so deeply engaged now. My chasseur, Lausanne, will travel with you. He is the best travelling servant in the world. He served me when I was your age. He is one of the few people, in whom I have unlimited

confidence. He is not only clever, but he is judicious. You will write to me as often as you can.' Strelamb,' and here he rang the bell, 'Strelamb has prepared all necessary letters and bills for you.' Here the functionary entered, 'Mr. Strelamb,' said my father, 'while you explain those papers to Count Contarini, I will write to the Duke of Montfort.'

I did not listen to the private secretary. I was so astonished. My father, in two minutes, had finished his letter. 'This may be useful to you, Contarini. It is to an old friend, and a powerful man. I would not lose time about your departure, Contarini. Mr. Strelamb, is there no answer from Baron Engel?'

'My lord, the carriage waits,' announced a servant.

‘I must go. Adieu! Contarini. Write when you arrive at Paris. Mr. Strelamb, see Baron Engel to-night, and send me off a courier with his answer. Adieu! Contarini.’

He extended me his hand. I touched it very slightly. I never spoke. I was thunderstruck.

Suddenly, I started up, and rang the bell. ‘Send me Lausanne!’ I told the servant.

Lausanne appeared. Had my astonishment not been excited by a greater cause, I might have felt considerable surprise at my father delegating to me his confidential domestic. Lausanne was a Swiss, about my father’s age, with a frame of iron, and all the virtues of his mountains. He was, I believe, the only person in whom my

father placed implicit trust. But I thought not of this then. 'Lausanne, I understand you are now in my service.'

He bowed.

'I have no doubt I shall find cause to confirm the confidence, which you have enjoyed in our house for more than twenty years. Is everything ready for my departure ?

'I had no idea that your excellency had any immediate intention to depart.'

'I should like to be off to-night, good Lausanne. Ay! this very hour. When can I go?'

'Your excellency's wardrobe must be prepared. Your excellency has not given Carl any directions.'

'None.' I do not mean to take him. I shall travel only with you.

‘Your excellency’s wardrobe——’

‘May be sufficiently prepared in an hour, and Paris must supply the rest. In a word, Lausanne, can I leave this place by day-break to-morrow? Think only of what is necessary. Show some of your old energy.’

‘Your excellency may rest assured,’ said Lausanne, after some reflection, ‘that everything will be prepared by that time.’

‘It is well. Is the Countess at home?’

‘The Countess quitted town yesterday on a visit to the Countess De Norberg.’

‘The Countess de Norberg! I should have seen her too. Go, Lausanne, and be punctual. Carl will give you the keys. The Countess de Norberg, Christiana! —Yes! I should have seen *her*. Ah! It is as well. I have no friends, and my

Aliens are brief, let them not be bitter.
 Farewell to the father that has no feeling,
 and thou too, Scandinavia, stern soil in
 which I have too long lingered—think of
 me hereafter as of some exotic bird, who,
 for a moment, lost its way in your cold
 heaven, but now has regained its course,
 and wings its flight to a more brilliant
 earth, and a brighter sky!

I.

ON the eighteenth day of August, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six, I praise the Almighty Giver of all goodness, that, standing upon the height of Mount Jura, I beheld the whole range of the High Alps, with Mont Blanc in the centre, without a cloud: a mighty spectacle rarely beheld, for, on otherwise cloudless days, these sublime elevations are usually veiled.

I accepted this majestic vision as a good omen. It seemed that Nature received me in her fullest charms. I was for some time so entranced, that I did not observe the

spreading and shining scene that opened far beneath me. The mountains, in ranges, gradually diminishing, terminated in isolated masses, whose enormous forms, in deep shade, beautifully contrasted with the glittering glaciers of the higher peaks, and rose out of a plain covered with fair towns and bright chateaux, embosomed in woods of chestnut, and vines festooning in orchards and cornfields. Through the centre of the plain, a deep blue lake wound its way, which, viewed from the height of Jura, seemed like a purple girdle carelessly thrown upon some imperial robe.

I had remained in Paris only a few days, and, without offering any explanation to our minister, or even signifying my intention to Lausanne, had quitted that city with the determination of reaching Venice without

delay. Now that it is probable I may never again cross the mountains, I often regret that I neglected this opportunity of becoming more acquainted with the French people. My head was then full of fantasies, and I looked upon the French as an *à-ri-poetical* nation ; but I have since often regretted that I neglected this opportunity of becoming acquainted with a race who exercise so powerful an influence over civilization.

I had thought of Switzerland only as of a rude barrier between me and the far object of my desires. The impression, that this extraordinary country made upon me, was perhaps increased by my previous thoughts having so little brooded over its idea. It was in Switzerland that I first felt how constantly to contemplate sublime

creation: develops the poetic power. "It was here that I first began to study Nature. Those forests of black gigantic pines rising out of the deep snows; those tall, white cataracts leaping like headstrong youth into the world, and dashing from their precipices, as if allured by the beautiful delusion of their own rainbow mist; those mighty clouds sailing beneath my feet, or clinging to the bosoms of the dark green mountains, or boiling up like a spell from the invisible and unfathomable depths; the fell avalanche, fleet as a spirit of evil, terrific when its sound suddenly breaks upon the almighty silence, scarcely less terrible when we gaze upon its crumbling and pallid frame, varied only by the presence of one or two blasted firs; the head of a mountain loosening from its brother peak, rooting up, in the roar of

its rapid rush, a whole forest of pines, and covering the earth for miles with elephantine masses; the supernatural extent of landscape that opens to us new worlds; the strong eagles, and the strange wild birds that suddenly cross you in your path, and stare, and shrieking fly—and all the soft sights of joy and loveliness that mingle with these sublime and savage spectacles, the rich pastures, and the numerous flocks, and the golden bees, and the wild flowers, and the carved and painted cottages, and the simple manners and the primeval grace——wherever I moved, I was in turn appalled or enchanted, but whatever I beheld, new images ever sprang up in my mind, and new feelings ever crowded on my fancy.

There is something magical in the mountain air. My heart is light, my spirits

cheerful, everything is exhilarating. I am in every respect a different being to what I am in lowlands. I cannot even think, I dissolve into a delicious reverie, in which everything occurs to me without effort. Whatever passes before me, gives birth in my mind to a new character, a new image, a new train of fancies. I sing, I shout, I compose aloud, but without premeditation, without any attempt to guide my imagination by my reason. How often, after journeying along the wild mule-track, how often, on a sunny day, have I suddenly thrown myself upon the turf, revelled in my existence, and then, as hastily, jumped up and raised the wild birds with a wilder scream. I think that these involuntary bursts must have been occasioned by the unconscious influence of extreme health.

As for myself, when I succeed in faintly recalling the rapture which I have experienced in these solitary rambles, and muse over the flood of fancy which then seemed to pour itself over my whole being, and gush out of every feeling, and every object, I contrast, with mortification, those warm and pregnant hours with this cold record of my maturer age.

I remember that when I first attempted to write, I had a great desire to indulge in Simile, and that I never could succeed in gratifying my wish. This inability, more than any other circumstance, convinced me that I was not a poet. Even in 'Manstein,' which was written in a storm, and without any reflection, there are, I believe, few images, and those probably are all copied from books. That which surprised

and gratified me most, when roving about Switzerland, was the sudden development which took place of the faculty of illustrating my thoughts and feelings. Every object that crossed me in some way associated itself with my moral emotions. Not a mountain, or lake, or river, not a tree or flower, or bird, that did not blend with some thought, or fancy, or passion, and become the lively personification of conceptions that lie sleeping in abstraction.

It is singular that, with all this, I never felt any desire to write. I never thought of writing. I never thought of the future, or of man, or fame. I was content to exist. I began from this moment to suspect, what I have since learnt firmly to believe, that the sense of existence is the greatest happiness, and that deprived of

every worldly advantage, which is supposed so necessary to our felicity, life, provided a man be not immured in a dungeon, must nevertheless be inexpressibly delightful. If, in striking the balance of sensation, misery were found to predominate, no human being would permit himself to exist; but however vast may be the wretchedness occasioned to us by the accidents of life, the certain sum of happiness, which is always supplied by our admirably-contrived being, ever supports us under the burthen. Those who are sufficiently interested with my biography to proceed with it, will find, as they advance, that this is a subject on which I am qualified to offer an opinion.

I returned from these glowing rambles to my head-quarters, which was usually

Genova: I, returned like the bees laden with treasure. I mused over all the beautiful images that had occurred to me, and all the new characters that had risen in my mind, and all the observations of nature which hereafter would perhaps permit me to delineate what was beautiful. For the moment that I mingled again with men I wished to influence them. I had no immediate or definite plan of appealing to their sympathies. Each hour I was more conscious of the long apprenticeship that was necessary in the cunning craft for which, I conceived, I possessed a predisposition. I thought of 'Mansiein' as of a picture painted by a madman in the dark, and when I remembered that crude performance, and gazed upon the beauty, and the harmony, and the

fitting parts of the great creations around me, my cheek has often burned even in solitude.'

In these moments rather of humility than despondence, I would fly for consolation to the blue waters of that beautiful lake whose shores have ever been the favourite haunt of genius, the fair and gentle Zeman.

None is there indeed in nature a sight more lovely, than to watch at decline of day, the last embrace of the sun lingering on the rosy glaciers of the White Mountain. Soon, too soon, the great luminary dies, the warm peaks subside into purple, and then die into a ghostly white; but soon, ah! not too soon, the moon springs up from behind a mountain, flings over

the lake a stream of light, and the sharp glaciers glitter like silver.

I have often passed the whole night upon these enchanted waters, contemplating their beautiful variety; and, indeed, if anything can console one for the absence of the moon and stars, it would be to watch the lightning, on a dark night, on this superb lake. It is incessant, and sometimes in four or five different places at the same time. In the morning, Lemian loses its ultramarine tint, and is covered with the shadows of mountains and chateaux.

In mountain valleys it is very beautiful to watch the effect of the rising and setting of the Sun. The high peaks are first illumined, the soft yellow light then tips

the lower elevations, and the bright golden showers soon bathe the whole valley, except a dark streak at the bottom, which is often not visited by sunlight. The effect of sunset is perhaps still more lovely. The highest peaks are those which the Sun loves most. One by one, the mountains, relatively to their elevations, steal into darkness, and the rosy tint is often suffused over the peaks and glaciers of Mont Blanc, while the whole world below is enveloped in the darkest twilight.

What is it that makes me long to dwell upon these scenes, which, with all their loveliness, I have never again visited? Is it indeed the memory of their extreme beauty, or of the happy hours they afforded me, or is it because I am approaching a period of my life, which I sometimes

feel I shall never have courage to *Abli-*
neate?

II.

THE thunder roared, the flashing lightning revealed only one universal mist, the wind tore up the pines by their roots, and flung them down into the valley, the rain descended in inundating gusts.

When once I had resolved to quit Geneva, my desire to reach Venice returned upon me in all its original force. I had travelled to the foot of the Simplon without a moment's delay, and now I had the mortification to be detained there in a wretched mountain village, intersected by

a torrent whose roar was deafening, and with large white clouds sailing about the streets.

The storm had lasted three days; no one had ever heard of such a storm at this time of the year; it was quite impossible to pass; it was quite impossible to say when it would end, or what would happen. The poor people only hoped that no evil was impending over the village of Brigg. As for myself, when, day after day, I awoke only to find the thunder more awful, the lightning more vivid, and the mist more gloomy, I began to believe that my two angels were combating on the height of Simplan, and that some supernatural, and perhaps beneficent power, would willingly prevent me from entering Italy.

I retired to bed, I flung my cloak upon a chair opposite a blazing wood fire, and I soon fell asleep. I dreamt that I was in the vast hall of a palace, and that it was full of reverend and bearded men in rich dresses. They were seated at a council table, upon which their eyes were fixed, and I, who had recently entered, stood aside. And suddenly their President raised his head, and observed me, and beckoned to me with much dignity. And I advanced to him, and he extended to me his hand, and said, with a gracious smile, *'You have been long expected.'*

The council broke up, the members dispersed, and, by his desire, I followed the President. And we entered another chamber, which was smaller, but covered with pictures, and on one side of the door was

a portrait of Julius Cæsar, and on the other one of myself. And my guide turned his head, and pointing to the paintings, said, '*You see you have been long expected. There is a great resemblance between you and your uncle.*'

And my companion suddenly disappeared, and being alone, I walked up to a large window, but I could distinguish nothing, except when the lightning revealed the thick gloom. And the thunder rolled over the palace. And I knelt down, and prayed, and suddenly the window was irradiated, and the bright form of a female appeared. Her fair hair reached beneath her waist, her countenance was melancholy, yet seraphic. In her hand, she held a crucifix. And I said, 'Oh blessed Magdalen have you at last returned? I have

been long wandering in the wilderness,
 and methought you had forgotten me.
 And indeed I am about again to go forth,
 but Heaven frowns upon my pilgrimage.
 And she smiled and said, '*Sunshine suc-
 ceeds to storm. You have been long ex-
 pected.*' And as she spoke, she vanished,
 and I looked again through the window,
 and beheld a beautiful city very fair in the
 Sun. Its marble palaces rose on each side
 of a broad canal, and a multitude of boats
 skimmed over the blue water. And I
 knew where I was. And I descended
 from the palace to the brink of the canal,
 and my original guide saluted me, and, in
 his company, I entered a gondola.
 "A clap of thunder broke over the very
 house, and woke me. I jumped up in my
 bed. I stared. I beheld sitting in my

room the same venerable personage, in whose presence I had, the moment before, found myself. The embers of the fire shot forth a faint and flickering light. I felt that I had been asleep, I felt that I had dreamed. I even remembered where I was. I was not in any way confused. Yet before me was this mysterious companion, gazing upon me with the same gracious dignity, with which he had, at first, beheld me in the palace. I remained sitting up in my bed, staring with starting eyes, and opened mouth. Gradually his image became fainter and fainter. His features melted away, his form also soon dissolved, and I discovered only the empty chair and hanging cloak.

I jumped out of bed. The storm still raged. A bell was tolling. Nothing is

more awful than a bell tolling in a storm.

It was about three hours past midnight.

I called Lausanne.

‘Lausanne,’ I said, ‘I am resolved to cross the mountain by sunrise, come what come may. Offer any rewards, make what promises you please—but I am resolved to cross—even in the teeth of an avalanche.’ Although I am a person easily managed in little matters, and especially by servants, I spoke in a tone, which Lausanne sufficiently knew me to feel was decisive. He was not one of those men, who make, or imagine difficulties, but, on the contrary, fruitful in discovering expedients, yet he seemed not a little surprised, and slightly hesitated.

‘Lausanne,’ I said, ‘if you think it too dangerous to venture, I release you from

‘your duty. But cross the mountain, and in two or three hours, I shall, even if I cross it alone.’

He quitted the room. I threw a fresh log upon the fire, and, repeated to myself, ‘*I have been long expected.*’

III.

BEFORE six o’clock, all was prepared. Besides the postilions, Lausanne engaged several guides. I think we must have been about six hours ascending, certainly not more, and this does not much exceed the usual course. I had occasion on this, as I have since at many other conjunctures, to observe what an admirable animal is

man when thrown upon his own resources in danger. The coolness, the courage, the perseverance, the acuteness, and the kindness, with which my companions deported themselves, were as remarkable as they were delightful. As for myself, I could do nothing, but lean back in the carriage, and trust to their experience and energy. It was indeed awful. We were almost always enveloped in mist, and if a violent gust, for a moment, dissipated the vapour, it was only to afford a glimpse of the precipices on whose very brink we were making our way. Nothing is more terrific than the near roar of a cataract in the dark. It is horrible. As for myself I will confess, that I was more than once fairly frightened, and when the agitated shouts of my companions indicated the imminence

Of the impending danger, I felt very much like a man, who had raised a devil that he cannot lay.

The storm was only on the lower part of the mountain. As we ascended, it became clearer. The scene was perfect desolation. At length we arrived at a small table land, surrounded by slight elevations, the whole covered with eternal snows. Cataracts were coursing down these hills in all directions, and the plain was covered with the chaotic forms of crumbled avalanches. The sky was a thick dingy white. My men gave a loud shout of exultation, and welcomed me to the summit of Simplon.

Here I shook hands, and parted, with my faithful guides. As I was drinking a glass of brandy, and enveloping myself in my furs, the clouds broke towards Italy,

and a beautiful streak of blue sky seemed the harbinger of the Ausonian Heaven. I felt in high spirits, and we dashed down the descent with an ease, and rapidity, that pleasantly reminded me, by the contrast, of our late labour.

A dashing descent down one of the high Alps is a fine thing. It is very exciting to scamper through one of those sublime tunnels, cut through solid rocks six thousand feet above the ocean,—to whirl along those splendid galleries over precipices whose terminations are invisible,—to gallop through passes, as if you were flying from the companions of the avalanches, which are dissolving at your feet,—to spin over bridges spanning a roaring and rushing torrent, and to dash through narrow gorges backed with eternal snows

peeping over the nearer and blacker background.

It was a sudden turn. Never shall I forget it. I called to Lausanne to stop, and notwithstanding the difficulty, they clogged the wheels with stones. It was a sudden turn of the road. It came upon me, like a spirit. The quick change of scenery around me had disturbed my mind, and prevented me from dwelling upon the idea. So it came upon me unexpectedly, most, most unexpectedly. Ah! why did I not then die! I was too happy. I stood up to gaze for the first time upon Italy, and the tears stole down my cheek.

Yes! yes! I at length gazed upon those beautiful and glittering plains. Yes! yes! I at length beheld those purple mountains, and drank the balmy breath

of that fragrant and liquid air. After such longing, after all the dull misery of my melancholy life, was this great boon indeed accorded me! Why, why did I not then die? I was indeed, indeed too happy!

IV.

I AWOKE. I asked myself, 'Am I indeed in Italy?' I could scarcely refrain from shouting with joy. While dressing, I asked many questions of Lausanne, that his answers might assure me of this incredible happiness. When he left the room, I danced about the chamber like a madman.

‘Am I indeed in Italy?’ My morning’s journey was the most satisfactory answer. Although, of late, the business of my life had been only to admire nature; my progress was nevertheless one uninterrupted gaze.

Those azure mountains, those shining lakes, those gardens, and palaces, and statues, those cupolaed convents crowning luxuriant wooded hills, and flanked by a single, but most graceful tree, the undulation of shore, the projecting headland, the receding bay, the roadside uninclosed, yet bounded with walnut; and vine; and fig, and acacia, and almond trees, bending down under their bursting fruit, the wonderful effect of light and shade, the trunks of every tree looking black as ebony; and their thick foliage, from the excessive

light, quite thin and transparent in the sunshine, the white sparkling villages, each with a church with a tall thin tower, the large melons trailing over the marble wall,—and, above all, the extended prospect so striking after the gloom of Alpine passes, and so different, in its sunny light from the reflected, unearthly glare of eternal snows,—yes, yes, this indeed was Italy! I could not doubt my felicity, even if I had not marked, with curious admiration, the black eyes and picturesque forms, that were flashing and glancing about me in all directions.

• Milan with its poetic Opera, and Verona gay amid the mingling relics of two thousand years, and Vicenza with its Palladian palaces and gates of triumph, and pensive Padua with its studious colonnades, I

tore myself from their attractions. Their choicest memorials only accelerated my progress, only made me more anxious to gain the chief seat of the wonderful, and romantic people, who had planted in all their market places the winged lion of St. Mark, and raised, between Roman amphitheatres and feudal castles, their wild and Saracenic piles.

I was upon the Brenta, upon that river, over which I had so often mused beneath the rigour of a Scandinavian heaven, the Brenta was before me with all those villas, which in their number, their variety, and their splendour, form the only modern creation, that can be placed with the Bæiæ of imperial Rome. I had quitted Padua at a very early hour to reach Venice before sunset. Half way, the horses jibbed on

the sandy road, and the carriage broke a spring. To pass the time, while this accident was repairing, Lausanne suggested to me to visit a villa at hand which was celebrated for the beauty of its architecture and gardens. It was inhabited only by an old domestic who attended me over the building. The vast suite of chambers, and their splendid, although ancient decorations, were the first evidence, I had yet encountered, of that domestic magnificence of the Venetians, of which I had heard so much. I walked forth into the gardens alone, to rid myself of the garrulous domestic. I proceeded along a majestic terrace, covered with orange trees, at the end of which was a very beautiful chapel. The door was unlocked, and I entered. An immense crucifix of ebony

was placed upon the altar, and partly concealed a picture fixed over the Holy Table. Yet the picture could not escape me. Oh! no, it could not escape me, for it was the original of that famous Magdalen, that had, so many years before, and in so different a place, produced so great a revolution in my feelings. I remained before it some time, and as I gazed upon it, the history of my life was again acted before me. I quitted the Chapel, revolving in my mind this strange coincidence, and crossing the lawn I came to a Temple which a fanciful possessor had dedicated to his friends. Over the portal was an inscription. I raised my sight, and read, *Enter; you have been long expected!*

I started, I looked around, all was

silent. I turned pale : I hesitated to go
 in. I examined the inscription again.
 My courage rallied, and I found myself
 in a small, but elegant banqueting house,
 furnished, but apparently long disused.
 I threw myself into a seat at the head of
 the table, and full of a rising superstition,
 I almost expected, that some of the vene-
 rable personages of my dream would enter
 to share my feast. They came not ; half
 an hour passed away ; I rose, and, without
 premeditation, I wrote upon the wall, ‘ *If
 I have been long expected, I have at length
 arrived. Be you also obedient to the call.* ’

V.

AN hour before sunset, I arrived at Fusina, and beheld, four or five miles out at sea, the towers and cupolas of Venice suffused with a rich golden light, and rising out of the bright blue waters. Not an exclamation escaped me. I felt like a man, who has achieved a great object. I was full of calm exultation, but the strange incident of the morning made me serious and pensive.

As our gondolas glided over the great Lagoon, the excitement of the spectacle reanimated me. The buildings, that I had so fondly studied in books and pictures, rose up before me. I knew them all; I

required no Cicerone. One by one, I caught the hooded Cupolas of St Mark, the tall Campanile red in the sun, the Moresco Palace of the Doges, the deadly Bridge of Sighs, and the dark structure to which it leads. There my gondola quitted the Lagoon, and, turning up a small canal, and passing under a bridge, which connected the quays, stopped at the steps of a palace.

I ascended a staircase of marble. I passed through a gallery crowded with statues, I was ushered into spacious apartments, the floors of which were marble, and the hangings satin. The ceilings were painted by Tintoretto and his scholars, and were full of Turkish trophies and triumphs over the Ottomite. The furniture was of the same rich material as the hangings,

and the gilding, although of two hundred years duration, as bright and burnished, as the costly equipment of a modern palace. From my balcony of blinds, I looked upon the great Lagoon. It was one of those glorious sunsets which render Venice, in spite of her degradation, still famous. The sky and sea vied in the brilliant multiplicity of their blended tints. The tall shadows of her Palladian churches flung themselves over the glowing and transparent wave out of which they sprang. The quays were crowded with joyous groups, and the black gondolas flitted, like sea serpents, over the red and rippling waters.

I hastened to the Place of St. Mark. It was crowded and illuminated. Three gorgeous flags waved on the mighty staffs,

which are opposite the church in all the old drawings, and which once bore the standards of Candia, and Cyprus, and the Morea. The coffee-houses were full, and gay parties, seated on chairs in the open air, listened to the music of military bands, while they refreshed themselves with confectionary so rich and fanciful, that it excites the admiration, and the wonder of all travellers, but which I have since discovered in Turkey to be oriental. The variety of costume was also great. The dress of the lower orders in Venice is still unchanged: many of the middle classes yet wear the cap and cloak. The Hungarian, and the German military, and the bearded Jew, with his black velvet cap and flowing robes, are observed with curiosity. A few days also before my

arrival, the Austrian squadron had carried into Venice a Turkish ship and two Greek vessels, who had violated the neutrality. Their crews now mingled with the crowd. I beheld, for the first time, the haughty and turbaned Ottoman, sitting cross-legged on his carpet under a colonnade, sipping his coffee and smoking a long chibouque, and the Greeks, with their small red caps, their high foreheads, and arched eyebrows.

Can this be modern Venice, I thought? Can this be the silent, and gloomy, and decaying city, over whose dishonourable misery I have so often wept? Could it ever have been more enchanting? Are not these indeed still subjects of a Doge, and still the bridegrooms of the ocean? Alas! the brilliant scene was as unusual

was unexpected, and was accounted for by its being the feast day of a favourite Saint. Nevertheless, I rejoiced at the unaccustomed appearance of the city at my entrance, and still I recall with pleasure the delusive moments, when strolling about the Place of St. Mark the first evening that I was in Venice, I for a moment mingled in a scene that reminded me of her lost light-heartedness, and of that unrivalled gaiety that so long captivated polished Europe.

The moon was now in her pride. I wandered once more to the quay, and heard for the first time a serenade. A juggler was conjuring in a circle under the walls of my hotel, and an itinerant opera was performing on the bridge. It is by moonlight that Venice is indeed an

'enchanted city.' The effect of the floods of silver light upon the twinkling fretwork of the Moresco architecture, the perfect absence of all harsh sounds, the never-ceasing music on the waters, produce an effect upon the mind which cannot be experienced in any other city.' As I stood gazing upon the broad track of brilliant light that quivered over the Lagoon, a gondolier saluted me. I entered his boat, and desired him to row me to the Grand Canal.

The marble palaces of my ancestors rose on each side, like a series of vast and solemn temples. How sublime were their broad fronts bathed in the mystic light, whose softening tints concealed the ravages of Time, and made us dream only of their eternity ! And could these great creations

ever die! I viewed them with a devotion, which I cannot believe could have been surpassed in the most patriotic period of the Republic. How willingly would I have given my life to have once more filled their mighty halls with the proud retainers of their free and victorious nobles!

As I proceeded along the canal, and retired from the quarter of St. Mark, the sounds of merriment gradually died away. The light string of a guitar alone tinkled in the distance, and the lamp of a gondola, swiftly shooting by, indicated some gay, perhaps anxious, youth hastening to the general rendezvous of festivity and love. The course of the canal bent, and the moon was hid behind a broad, thick arch, which black, yet sharply defined, spanned the breadth of the water. I beheld the famous Rialto,

Was it possible? was it true? was I not all this time in a reverie gazing upon a drawing in de Winter's studio! Was it not some delicious dream—some delicious dream, from which, perhaps this moment, I was about to be roused to cold, dull life? I struggled not to wake, yet from a nervous desire to move, and put the vision to the test, I ordered the gondolier to row to the side of the canal, jumped out, and hurried to the bridge. Each moment, I expected that the arch would tremble and part, and that the surrounding palaces would dissolve into mist, that the lights would be extinguished, and the music cease, and that I should find myself in my old chamber in my father's house.

I hurried along, I was anxious to reach

the centre of the bridge before I 'woke'. It seemed like the crowning incident of a dream, which, it is remarkable, never occurs, and which, from the very anxiety of occasions, only succeeds in breaking our magical slumbers.

I stood upon Rialto; I beheld on each side of me, rising out of the waters, which they shadowed with their solemn image, those colossal and gorgeous structures raised from the spoils of the teeming Orient, with their pillars of rare marbles, and their costly portals of jasper, and porphyry, and agate; I beheld them ranged in majestic order, and streaming with the liquid moonlight. Within these walls my fathers revelled!

I bowed my head, and covered my face with my hands. I could gaze no

more upon that fair, but melancholy
vision.

A loud, but melodious chorus broke
upon the air. I looked up, I marked the
tumultuous waving of many torches, and
heard the trampling of an approaching
multitude. They were at the foot of the
bridge. They advanced, they approached.
A choir of priests, bearing in triumph the
figure of a Saint, and followed by a vast
crowd carrying lights, and garlands, and
banners, and joining in a joyful hymn,
swept by me. As they passed, they sang
this verse—

‘Wave your banners! Sound, sound
your voices! for he has come, he has
come! Our Saint, and our Lord! He
has come, in pride and in glory, to
greet with love his Adrian bride.’

"It is singular, but these words struck me as applicable to myself. The dream at the foot of the Alps, and the inscription in the garden on the Brenta, and the picture in the chapel, there was a connexion in all these strange incidents, which indeed harmonized with my early life and feelings. I fully believed myself the object of an omnipotent Destiny over which I had no control. I delivered myself up, without a struggle, to the eventful course of Time. I returned home pensive, yet prepared for a great career, and as the drum of the Hungarian guard sounded, as I entered the Lagoon, I could not help fancying, that its hurried note was ominous of surprise and consternation. I remembered that when a boy, sauntering with Musæus, I believed that I had a predis-

position for conspiracies, and I could not forget that, of all places in the world, Venice was the one in which I should most desire to find myself a conspirator.

I returned to the Hotel, but as I was little inclined to slumber, I remained walking up and down the Gallery, which on my arrival, amid the excitement of so many distracting objects, I had but slightly noticed. I was struck by its size, and its magnificence, and as I looked upon the long row of statues gleaming in the white moonlight, I could not refrain from pondering over the melancholy fortunes of the high race, who had lost this sumptuous inheritance, commemorating even in its present base uses, their noble exploits, magnificent tastes, and costly habits.

Lausanne entered. I enquired, if 'he' knew to what family of the Republic this building had originally belonged ?

'This was the Palazzo Contarini, Sir.'

'I was glad that he could not mark my agitation.

'I thought,' I rejoined after a moment's hesitation, 'I thought the Palazzo Contarini was on the Grand Canal.'

'There is a Palazzo Contarini on the Grand Canal, Sir, but this is the original palace of the House.' When I travelled with my Lord, twenty-five years ago, and was at Venice, the Contarini family still maintained both establishments.'

'And now?' I enquired. 'This was the first time that I had ever held any conversation with Lausanne, for although I was

greatly pleased with his talents, and could not be insensible to his ever-watchful care, I had from the first suspected, that he was a secret agent of my father, and, although I thought fit to avail myself of his abilities, I had studiously withheld from him my confidence.

‘The family of Contarini is, I believe, extinct,’ replied Lausanne.

‘Ah!’ Then thinking that something should be said to account for my ignorance of that, with which, apparently, I ought to have been well acquainted, I added in a careless voice, ‘We have never kept up any intercourse with our Italian connexions, which I do not regret, for I shall not enter into society here.’

The moment, that I had uttered this, I felt the weakness of attempting to mystify

Lausanne, who probably knew much more of the reasons of this non-intercourse than myself. He was moving away when I called him back with the intention of speaking to him fully upon this subject of my early speculations. I longed to converse with him about my mother, and my father's youth, about everything that had happened.

‘Lausanne,’ I said.

He returned. The moon shone brightly upon his imperturbable, and inscrutable countenance. I saw only my father's spy. A feeling of false shame prevented me from speaking. I did not like frankly to confess my ignorance upon such delicate subjects to one, who would, in all probability, affirm his inability to enlighten me, and I knew enough of him to be con-

